THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

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NOTICE

To those who bind

THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

The advertising sections at the front of each issue have been printed on separate forms so that they can easily be taken out and discarded.

The title page and index to the first volume are sewed in the back of this number. They are also on a separate form so that they can be moved to the front of the bound volume.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

LINDSAY ROGERS is Burgess Professor of Public Law in Columbia University. Among his outstanding books are *The American Senate, The French Parliamentary System,* and his most recent study, *Crisis Government.*

FRANK LAWRENCE OWSLEY, professor of history at Vanderbilt University, in this issue relates the recent decisions of the Supreme Court to the earlier history of that body. Readers of his *State's Rights in the Confederacy* will find of particular interest his treatment of the principle of state's rights in relation to the Jeffersonian tradition. Dr. Owsley has contributed numerous articles to *The Virginia Quarterly Review, The Hound and Horn,* and other magazines.

JOHN T. FLYNN is well known for his knowledge of political and economic questions and his ability to write vigorously about them. His analysis in this issue of the recent attempt to whitewash the Hoover Administration is in the familiar style of his newspaper articles on public affairs and his weekly column, "Other People's Money," in *The New Republic;* a style which, by employing humor instead of hysteria, directness instead of oratory, has proved him one of the most effective radical journalists in this country. He is author of *Investment Trusts Gone Wrong!, Graft in Business, God's Gold,* and *Security Speculation: Its Economic Effects.*

ALLEN TATE in "A Traditionist Looks at Liberalism" provides the most succinct statement he has made of his views on the subject of tradition. His numerous essays on this topic have provoked in recent years much discussion and comment. Mr. Tate's collected essays on literature and other subjects have recently been issued under the title, *Essays in Reaction.* He

1911--*The Yale Review*--1936

With our Autumn 1935 Number, this quarterly entered on its twenty-fifth year. Under the vigorous guidance of Professor, later Dean, and now Governor, Cross, The Yale Review has progressed steadily to its preeminent position as *"The American National Quarterly of International Distinction"*; "facile princeps among American periodicals", the Boston Herald calls it. Contributors to the *Silver Anniversary Number* include *Walter Lippman, Andre Siegfried, Thomas Mann, Lewis Mumford, Mary Colum, Arthur H. Compton, C. B. Tinker, Jesse Stuart, James R. Angell, Henry Norris Russell, St. John Ervine, Wm. H. Chamberlin, Sir Arthur Salter,* and many others.

Editor: WILBUR CROSS *Managing Editor:* HELEN MCAFEE
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IN OUR WINTER 1936 NUMBER

"Jefferson in America Now", by *Charles A. Beard.* "Mark Twain", by *Wm. Lyon Phelps.* "A Clarifying Foreign Policy", by *Samuel F. Bemis.* Four Poems, by *Robert Frost.* "Films of a Moonstruck World", by *Richard Watts, Jr.* "Can We Improve the Public Service?", by *Leonard D. White.* "Tearing Down the West", by *Erna Fergusson.* "Christmas in Ecuador", by *Richard C. Gill.* "The New Ireland", by *Sean O'Faolain.* "Labor and the Government", by *Sumner H. Slichter.* "Wedding of the First-Born", a story by *Jo Pagano.* A Letter from England, by *James Truslow Adams.* 20 Reviews of two-score important new non-fiction Books.

IN THE SPRING NUMBER

"The International House of Cards", by *Alvin Johnson.* "A Positive Programme for the Republican Party", by *Chester H. Rowell.* "Friends and Enemies of Learning", by *President Conant* of Harvard. "Fiction and the Front Page", by *Pearl S. Buck.* "Mexican Prospects", by *R. L. Martin.* "The American Language", by *H. L. Mencken.* "Economic Forces in Italy", by *Gaetano Salvemini.* "Multiplying Man", by *Raymond Pearl.* Stories by *Paul Horgan* and *Walter de la Mare.* Verse. Book Reviews.

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has also recently published his third volume of poetry, *The Mediterranean and Other Poems.*

HAROLD SCOTT QUIGLEY, professor of political science at the University of Minnesota, has long been a student of Far-Eastern politics. He was in China from 1921 to 1923, and in 1930 was Guggenheim Fellow in Japan. He is author of *From Versailles to Stresa* and *Japanese Government and Politics.*

ANDREW NELSON LYTLE is the author of *Bedford Forrest and His Critter Company* and of numerous contributions to magazines. An extended study of Douglas Southall Freeman's *R. E. Lee* by Mr. Lytle appeared in the Autumn issue of *The Southern Review.* A historical novel by Mr. Lytle will be published this year.

HOWELL VINES has published two "Arcadian" novels, *A River Goes With Heaven* and *This Green Thicket World,* which deal with the Alabama country, the setting of his story in this issue. He has also contributed stories to *The Atlantic Monthly* and other magazines.

ELMA GODCHAUX is a native of Louisiana. One of her stories is reprinted in the most recent O'Brien collection, and she is the author of a novel, *Stubborn Roots,* which has just come from the press.

MARY EVERETT lives at present in Minnesota. She writes, however, that she was "educated, christened, and confirmed in Virginia." Her observations on contemporary life in that state are based on personal experience, therefore. She has published essays in *The American Review* and elsewhere.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER has been prominently identified with the Imagist movement from its inception. He has published numerous volumes of poems, the last of which, *XXIV Elegies,* appeared last year and was reviewed in the Autumn number of *The Southern Review.*

W. R. MOSES has contributed to *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, The New Republic,* and the poetry supplement of *The American Review.* A group of his poems appeared in the recent anthology of the work of young poets, *Trial Balances.* At present Mr. Moses teaches at Hendrix College in Arkansas.

THE VIRGINIA QUARTERLY REVIEW

announces for April, 1936:

Europe: 1936, *by Louis Fischer*

New Debts for Old, *by Robert C. Binkley*

What Does the South Want? *by John Crowe Ransom*

The Soul of James Boswell, *by Dixon Wecter*

Inflation in Lilliput, *by John Schoolcraft*

Odyssey of the Idea, *by Julius W. Friend*

The Poet, *by Albert Halper*

The Merchant of London and the Treacherous Don, *by Josephine Pinckney*

Poetry, *by Robert Frost, Ben Belitt*

Discussions of New Books

Future issues will contain work by Allen Tate, John Peale Bishop, R. P. Blackmur, Scott Buchanan, Walter de la Mare, Carleton Beals, Herbert Read, Albert Guérard, Jr.

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(continued from page vii)

HARRIS DOWNEY, a member of the English Department of Louisiana State University, has in recent years made a number of studies of the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. These have appeared in the form of articles and reviews in *The Commonweal* and *The Virginia Quarterly Review.*

YVOR WINTERS, who is a member of the English Department of Leland Stanford University, is the author of six volumes of verse and of a number of critical essays. He has severely attacked the formlessness of much contemporary verse, and has attempted in his own verse to demonstrate the continued vitality of traditional forms.

THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL, is the author of two volumes of verse, *High Passage* and *Westering*. Mr. Ferril lives in Denver, Colorado.

GEORGE MARION O'DONNELL has contributed to *Direction, The American Review,* and *The Southern Review*. His first volume of verse will be published this spring.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM has appeared twice before in *The Southern Review*. In contributing this note on the poetry of Mr. O'Donnell, he carries further the studies in poetry which have distinguished many recent numbers of *The Virginia Quarterly Review, The Yale Review,* and other magazines.

DONALD DAVIDSON has published two volumes of verse, *An Outland Piper* and *The Tall Men,* and has contributed critical essays to various magazines. A poem by Mr. Davidson appeared in the Summer issue of *The Southern Review,* and an essay, "A Note on American Heroes," in the Winter issue.

R. P. BLACKMUR, who reviews the fiction of the quarter in this issue, has contributed many critical essays to such magazines as *The Hound and Horn* and *The Magazine*. A number of these essays have been collected and issued recently under the general title, *The Double Agent*. This volume will be reviewed by F. Cudworth Flint in the Summer issue of *The Southern Review.*

THE JOURNAL *of* SOUTHERN HISTORY

◆◆◆◆◆◆

A quarterly review devoted to the encouragement and promotion of interest and research in the history of the South.

The *Journal of Southern History* is the official organ of the Southern Historical Association.

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The contents of the February, 1936, issue:

What the South Has Done About Its History. By E. Merton Coulter.

Duff Green: Industrial Promoter. By Fletcher M. Green.

Property Rights in the Provincial System of Maryland: Proprietary Policy. By Charles A. Barker.

The First Annual Meeting of the Southern Historical Association. By William C. Binkley.

Documents:

Behind the Scenes of the Reconstruction Legislature in South Carolina: Diary of Josephus Woodruff. Edited by R. H. Woody.

Book Reviews.

Historical News and Notices.

Directory of Contributors.

◆◆◆◆◆◆

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For editorial correspondence: The Managing Editor, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

For advertising in the Journal: Edwin Adams Davis, Editorial Associate, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

For membership in the Association ($3.00 per year, including a subscription to the Journal): Fletcher M. Green, Secretary-Treasurer, Emory University, Georgia.

(continued from page ix)

MARK VAN DOREN is widely known as a poet and a critic. A group of his recent poems, accompanied by a critical note by Howard Baker, appeared in the Winter number.

ELEANOR CARROLL CHILTON'S most recent novel, *Follow the Furies,* was reviewed by Andrew Lytle in the Summer issue of *The Southern Review.*

CAROLINE GORDON, whose novels about southwestern Kentucky, *Penhally* and *Aleck Maury: Sportsman,* have finely recreated the past of that section, here reviews *Old Jules,* by Mari Sandoz, a book which springs from an impulse very closely akin to that behind her own work. A story by Miss Gordon appeared in the Autumn number of *The Southern Review.*

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The Donner Party Crosses the Desert
Early Days at Fort Missoula

Stories

The Village—Alfred Morang writes of the Depression
Immortal Sound—A startling short-story by Bertha Morrison
Pieces—The wife whose hat is wrong or the wife whose hat is right?—Belle Fligelman poses the query
Bun—Jean Taylor writes of children on a Montana Ranch
The Helping Hand—George Snell, author of *The Great Adam*, waxes sympathetic and ironic
Dry Land Boat—The brother should have married her, says H. M. Corning—perhaps
Plow in the Sunset—Conrad Pendleton writes of pioneer days
Stones into Silver—A story of beauty written by Erling Larsen.

Poetry

Fox Hunt on Defeated Creek—James Still (Kentucky)
Up-River Men—Verne Bright (Oregon)
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POETRY PRIZE

The Editors of *The Southern Review* announce that the closing date for the contest has been changed from May 15 to August 1, 1936. The prize of two hundred and fifty dollars plus the usual publication rates will be announced in the Autumn Issue, 1936. The work submitted must fall within the approximate limits of one hundred and fifty and five hundred lines. Manuscripts entered for the award must be unsigned, and must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope and by a signed statement entering them in the contest. The Editors retain the right to publish in *The Southern Review* at the usual rates any poems entered. The announcement of the judges for the contest will be made in the Summer Issue.

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England Today, by Harold J. Laski
Constitutional Reform, by William Yandell Elliott
Conflict: 1914-1936, by B. E. Schmitt
The Contemporary Scene, by R. M. MacIver
Social Security, by Broadus Mitchell
Administration of Public Affairs, by Leonard D. White
Eugene O'Neill, by Bonamy Dobrée
Later Poetry of W. B. Yeats, by R. P. Blackmur
Religion Without Poetry, by James McBride Dabbs
William James, by John Dewey
Proletarian Literature, by Kenneth Burke
Literature and Economics, by Allen Tate
Europe, by Crane Brinton
Recent Criticism, by F. Cudworth Flint
T. E. Lawrence, by Liddell Hart
Criticism of the Summer Quarter, by Dixon Wecter
Auden and the Limits of Satire, by John Crowe Ransom
A Note on Hart Crane, by Philip Horton

FICTION:

Picnic at Hamburg, by K. C. Shelby
The Road to Calamity, by George Milburn
Linda, by Frederick Scribner
Old Man, by Thomas Thompson
Silence, by Raymond Dannebaum

RTICLES, POETRY, FICTION, and REVIEWS, by George Fort Milton, How-rd Baker, O. W. Riegel, Thomas Wolfe, Robert Kent Gooch, Malcolm owley, Stark Young, Katherine Anne Porter, Mark Van Doren, Mario raz, and others.

CRISIS GOVERNMENT: 1936 MODEL

Lindsay Rogers

RECENT CONGRESSIONAL and presidential efforts to enact neutrality legislation have shown facets that are both melancholy and ominous. The joint endeavors furnish a rather nice case study of the way representative government can eschew efficiency and achieve impotence. With haste that was irresponsible and lightheartedness that was not far from levity, the Congress last August enacted neutrality legislation designed to keep the country out of the next European war.

Representatives and senators were anxious to adjourn and to go to their homes. Debate was inadequate. There was an acute difference of opinion with the State Department and the President. The latter, instead of sending the measure back and demanding that it be given the consideration its importance warranted, justified affixing his signature on the ground that a termination date of March 1, 1936, would permit a less casual policy to be excogitated—that is, a policy more akin to the policy of the executive. During the present session of Congress, debate has been thorough: in congressional committee hearings rather than in the House or in the Senate. More and more do these segments of Congress, which conduct inquisitions before they frame laws, steal the limelight from the legislature itself and lessen its prestige and authority. Outside of Congress, with exceptional fullness and intelligence, neutrality has been discussed in the press and on the platform. After this thorough debate Congress and the

President are forced to say *non possumus*. The temporary law will be extended.

The fault is in the governmental system and political climate as much as in men. Pride of senatorial prima donnas, influence of economic interests and foreign races, parochialism in Congress, timidity in the State Department, and recognition that the President must on important matters be his own Secretary of State (even though at the time he may be standing for reëlection) combine to put a great country in a state of nonage so far as the conduct of foreign policy is concerned. We have known this before, but realizing it again causes melancholy reflections. These are no more pleasant because their occasion was delayed until twenty years after the interests of American manufacturers, shippers, and bankers became so heavily vested in the success of the Allies that the German submarine campaign inevitably drew the United States into the European war. Interest in neutrality has been passionate but the emotion was long postponed.

What is ominous is that the government suddenly excites itself over neutrality because it realizes that the condition of European relations is steadily deteriorating. Gone are the days when it seemed possible that some of the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles might be cured by peaceful negotiation. Briand and Stresemann are dead. The *Quai d'Orsay* no longer bends in rare gestures of appeasement. The Hitler régime feverishly rearms so that Germany may secure a place in the sun. Grandi no longer represents Italy at Geneva. Mussolini is his own Foreign Minister. Rarely before in Europe has an unholy marriage of political passion and economic misery been so fruitful of bitterness, of strain, and of psychological abnormality. In a Wilsonian phrase that events have flouted, the War was being fought to make the world safe for democracy. Now the grim question is what the dictators are going to do, and how severely what they do will harm the three great democracies that remain—England, France, and the United States.

This question was implicit in President Roosevelt's radio address to Congress and the country in fulfillment of the constitutional requirement that the president shall "from time to time give to Congress information of the state of the Union." The first part of his "message" was a picture

—somewhat truculent as a presidential utterance, but not at all overdrawn—of the ominous outlook for a Europe dominated by the "twin spirits of autocracy and aggression." In contrast, the American scene is idyllic. It has been made so by the present administration. That, in a partisan sense, was a challenge to the opposition. In a more fundamental sense the challenge is a query as to what American representative institutions must do—and the way in which they shall do it—in order to avoid the dangers that lurk in the paths of all democracies. Speaking as the head of a great state, President Roosevelt did not and could not say that dictators of the present vintage must either engage in, or at least threaten, foreign adventures. They seize power promising to make revolutions: to increase the economic well-being of the masses. This they have not been able to do. There has been no real revolution in either Italy or Germany. Economic well-being has lessened. Hence the attention of the masses must be directed outside the country's borders. For non-achievement this gives an alibi that is temporarily effective. At the same time it is a guarantee, if not of popular support, at least of less popular criticism. Meanwhile, also, what recovery there is results from war preparations, which in addition to serving as a sedative, furnish sustenance. From this point of view Russia is vastly different from Italy and Germany, for Russia had a real revolution. Hence there is no necessity for a war spirit. War is feared because it would delay the measures that are being taken to implement the revolution. Unlike the other dictatorships, also, Russia makes successive concessions to appease criticism. She has learned that Bismarck's maxim, "Any fool can govern by martial law," may not be true if the period of government extends too long. In Japan—which is another dictatorship—there was no pretense of revolution. That island empire sweeps onward into China, but the Far East seems very far away to all those who do not live in the East. Hence the Japanese adventure has not caused uneasiness so acute as that which is caused by Germany's war preparations or by Mussolini's attempt to conquer Ethiopia. The latter venture, in respect of the dignity of the enemy and the stakes of victory, may have elements of burlesque, but there is no comic relief for the grimness of Hitler's methods or aims.

Sedative and sustenance: that might be the slogan of the dictators. Part of the slogan must be used by the democracies, for they provide sustenance. *Laissez faire* has long since been abandoned in the democracies as well as under the dictatorships, but the legislative wretches responsible do not seem fully to realize what they have done. "What have you got against Lacey?" a United States Senator asked a witness before a Senatorial Committee who was suggesting that the ideal was outmoded. Whether the bull was senatorial, stenographic, or typographical, the Government Printing Office has not disclosed. The fact is, however, that "Lacey" has been more harshly dealt with by the American than by the British or French governments. During the last two years governmental experimentation has been more persistent in the United States than in any other country, save Russia. The comparison must be quantitative rather than qualitative because there are two important differences. The American experiments are not part of a general plan: some indeed have contradicted each other. Moreover, instead of modifying or even controlling capitalist society, the experiments have, for the most part, sought to bolster it up.

Intelligent departures from *laissez faire* are far more difficult for some governments than for others. Peoples must be resigned to the pain that any planning will require. Intelligence in high places may vary. These are uncertain factors. More certain in their consequences are different forms of government and party organization. When endeavoring to interfere in economic life intelligently and sharply, French coalition cabinets, for example, are a much less effective instrument than a British cabinet, backed by a stable party majority. The two year term of the American Congress, dependence of members on local party organizations rather than on the national party, and congressional control of the purse strings mean exceptional difficulties in the United States. Even if these are not insuperable, where can the administrative competence—even omniscience—be found, and can the politicians be prevented from controlling it? The mere enumeration of these factors invites scepticism, but those who talk about "planning" rarely mention them. In short, it is optimistic to hope that in a democracy departures from *laissez faire* will be intelligently conceived and that the results will be of the second-, or third-, not of the fourth-best variety. If happily this should be the case, it will not mean that the depart-

ures are based on ideas of national interest (for who can agree on what ideas are correct?), but it will mean that they will show some coolness to interests that are clearly sectional and will recognize the necessity of efficient nonpolitical administration. Even so much is a counsel of perfection.

Internally, the democracies must provide sustenance even if they do no more than spend freely. In attempting this, they have been surprised to learn that it is difficult to spend large sums quickly if any return is demanded. But the problem is more than internal. The democracies defend their natural resources while doles keep their peoples from starving. They drink deeply of autarky, refusing to remember that the hang-over will be most unpleasant and long drawn out. Militarily they are at peace with each other while they engage in monetary wars. They live for today, forgetful of tomorrow.

Within twelve months all three principal states that still have representative institutions will have consulted their electors, and the elections are *free*! That is important. The British consultation was held in November last, and the Conservative Government profited greatly from the tension in Europe. It elected more members of the House of Commons than would have been possible had the international situation been less acute, but there were other factors that handicapped the opposition. Though the British elector does no more than choose a member of Parliament, the British electorate wishes to know the leaders for whom, in effect, it is voting. Conservatives knew that they were supporting Mr. Baldwin and his party friends. The voter could be certain who the Prime Minister would be and was reasonably sure of most of the cabinet slate. Laborites were of necessity much vaguer about the persons for whom they were voting. Until it has personnel that is clearly marked with the qualities of leadership and claims for office, the Labor Party will be at a disadvantage. Perhaps this may become less if the Party is effective in opposition.

The British government is still the most efficient piece of representative political machinery now at work in the world. Barring war in Europe or a domestic catastrophe of which there are as yet no signs, the political machinery seems able easily to withstand assaults from the left or from the right. On occasion, however, the machinery can creak rather badly. The

persons who headed the British government throughout the first six months of 1935 bear some—even much—of the responsibility for Italy's war against Ethiopia. A forthright answer should have been given to Mussolini in January when he intimated his intention of embarking on the African adventure. Conceivably he might have halted, for stopping then would have meant little or no loss of face. Had England been definite even as late as the League Council meetings of April and May, it is arguable that the situation would not have developed in the disastrous way in which it did develop. Certainly there would have been no doubt about England's position. That would have contributed to clearer thinking and sharper judgments on the issues involved. But, as in the summer of 1914, British statesmen hesitated to say *yes* and feared to say *no*. They preferred to wait and see.

A month after the elections, the Hoare-Laval conversations furnished an incident that shook parliamentary government to its foundations. It is true that no open cracks were left in the edifice, but the occupants of the building knew that there had been a real quake, and they quaked with it. The most hopeful aspect of the incident was the demonstration that British public opinion can be aroused and made effective. British opinion is frequently described as inert. Sluggish it is, in the sense that it does not push or pull through group or sectional interests as does public opinion in France and, to a far greater—even devastating—extent in the United States. But in physics inertia is "a property of matter by virtue of which it continues in its existing state whether of rest *or of uniform motion* in a straight line, unless that state is altered by external force." From the time of the peace ballot British public opinion was moving in a straight line. It was not stopped by cabinet approval of the Hoare-Laval formulae. On the contrary the "external force," the cabinet, had to give way. The Government—and the country—suffered a great loss of prestige; but barring similar future mistakes, the hurt will be temporary, even to Mr. Baldwin's reputation. He may at least console himself by remembering that no dictator would believe himself strong enough to say to his legislature that he had sinned and was sorry and to ask for another chance. From a longer view, the incident will raise pertinent questions as to the relation between the Foreign Secretary and the permanent officials of the Foreign Office, and between the Foreign

Secretary and the cabinet. The House of Commons may become more interested in the fact that, so far as foreign affairs are concerned, statesmen move in a mysterious way their blunders to perform.

French elections come in May. Their results will not be decisive. The tendency may be slightly leftwards. That is not an unusual swing for the French political pendulum after the country has had a taste of what is believed to be economic good housekeeping, even though undertaken by a cabinet supported by a chamber which could create a left majority. The Laval economy decrees have given the country far more than a taste of housekeeping. Some of the decrees were so far-reaching that it would be more accurate to say renovation. They were reminiscent of the Brüning decrees of 1931, but one should not thereby conclude that because the Brüning decrees paved the way for Hitler, the Laval decrees are a step on the way to an extraordinary régime in France. In France political and economic conditions are entirely different. Long before 1931 Hitler was the leader of the National Socialists, who formed a party and had a program. There is no outstanding anti-parliamentary leader in France. There is no anti-parliamentary party. The groups—*Croix de Feu,* the *Jeunesses Patriotes,* and so on—to which young people flock are vague in respect of both program and strategy. French political institutions, nevertheless, face serious problems. If disaster is to be made less likely, there must be some implementing of the Doumergue proposals for constitutional amendment —to give the prime minister greater authority and to limit parliamentary initiative in spending. That this is not done is due, in part, to lack of confidence by the country in Parliament and the failure of French politicians, with few exceptions, to possess character—two factors which have long embarrassed the régime. If the picture is painted in the darkest colors, it is white in comparison with the Weimar régime under Brüning. The contrast is just as great on the economic side even though the French budget is sadly unbalanced and the costs of remaining on gold cannot be endured much longer. The approaching period may be much like that of 1926, with the difference that there is no Poincaré to take the helm. Happily the absence of an able and respected parliamentary leader is made less ominous by the absence of anti-parliamentary leaders.

In the United States, the election—a quadrennial civil war now under way—will come to an end in November. The decisive battle will be over the presidency. That struggle is prepared for, long in advance. Scouting engagements are already frequent, but the real barrage will not begin until after the nominating conventions in June. In this political warfare the imponderables are of much greater importance than in actual warfare. This means that discussions of strategy and anticipations of victory or defeat must be in exceedingly general terms. Here an attempt will be made to consider, not the specific issues that may be involved (for example, on the question of whether the budget should or can be balanced and, if so, how), but broader questions relating to the terrain and the participants. Whatever the result of the battle, crisis government in the United States will be subjected to new tests. The formidable question will again be asked: can representative government adapt itself to deal with emergencies? The emergency which will face the government after November will be no less real than the emergency of 1933. There will be different and perhaps greater difficulties in meeting it. Not the least important of these will be the limitations which a written constitution imposes on governmental authority—limitations which in 1933 it was believed, or at least hoped, would not be so strict.

One of the familiar arguments used in support of the principle of dictatorship is that it can avoid delays and dissensions that are characteristic of representative institutions. As has been frequently pointed out, the argument is specious, for there is no reason why representative institutions cannot become effective and delegate to executives adequate authority to make the decisions that are necessary. During the War, that was done by all of the democracies. It was done in England in 1931, when the National Government came into office. It was done in France in 1926, and again in 1935. After March, 1933, no American could suggest that his executive did not have adequate authority. But when enormous powers are granted by legislatures, their extent and the manner of their conferment should be carefully scrutinized both by the grantor and by the grantee. There was no such scrutiny in Washington. Time seemed to be of the essence and Congress was therefore hasty. Perhaps this was inevitable. But later, when it had more leisure, Congress should have reëxamined the powers that had

been granted. Their scope should have been redefined, and safeguards should have been suggested. At the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue the grantee should have proposed his own safeguards and should have asked that Congress protect him as well as itself against possible excesses, either in scope or in procedure. President Roosevelt was not far from this point when he said in his "Message" that the "instruments of public power" built up during his administration would be "wholesome and proper" only in the hands of a people's government. If "in the hands of political puppets of an economic autocracy, such power would provide shackles for the liberties of the people." Governor Smith was no closer to the point when he said that this meant: "If you are going to have an autocrat, take me; but be very careful about the other fellow."

The problem I pose is more technical than political. It is a problem of draftsmanship by Congress and of draftsmanship, publicity, and procedural safeguards by the Executive. The extent to which this problem was ignored was clearly shown in the "hot oil" case. The government and an oil company fought over a code provision which at the time was not in the code. As the Chief Justice said, there had been a "failure to give appropriate public notice of the change in the section, with the result that the persons affected, the prosecuting authorities, and the courts were alike ignorant of the alteration." Even Mr. Justice Cardozo, dissenting, declared that "one must deplore the administrative methods that brought about uncertainty for a time as to the terms of the executive orders intended to be law."

The matter is important from two aspects—one permanent and one transient. It is clear that representative institutions can survive against a demand for extraordinary régimes only if *inter alia* they prove that they are efficient. Outcries against powers that are granted may be inevitable, but it is possible to avoid outcries against the manner of conferment and the manner of exercise. Elected representatives of the people are naturally reluctant to abdicate. Let it be shown that their abdication was careless or that the persons in whose favor they abdicated behaved irresponsibly, and the case will be stronger against necessary abdications in the future. With a disregard of logic, the case will be based on principle rather than on the errors of previous grantors and grantees.

The transient aspect of congressional carelessness and executive indifference is in respect of the coming election. Because of this carelessness the administration will be more on the defensive that it otherwise would have to be, but it cannot maintain that it was without adequate authority. To be sure, some of that authority was taken away when the Supreme Court of the United States began to hand down its restraining decisions, but judicial intervention came late. On the two major statutes, indeed, the verdict was not altogether unwelcome. The clouds of words in the opinions had silver linings. The Schechter decision ridded the President of the incubus of the National Recovery Act and made it unnecessary for him to proceed either to modify it profoundly or to dismantle it completely. When that decision came, frantic attempts were made to revamp the Agricultural Adjustment Act. The lawyers suddenly began to burn midnight oil, but to no avail, for the Court's objection was much broader than the one which the lawyers thought they could obviate. Here again, however, there could be smiles as well as grimaces. Few had maintained that the principle of crop control underlying the Agricultural Adjustment Act could be a permanent principle. Some better method had to be found, and the Court forced the administration to attempt to find it.

So far as the Recovery Administration was concerned, the President gained a decided political advantage. Unanticipated, doubtless, by the four judges who are always together, the Court's decision helped him out of a hole at the same time that it drew critical fire away from the White House. Agriculture had had so much done for it by the time of the decision that the interference with the control and payment schemes caused no crisis. Furthermore, the movement of economic recovery—whether it came despite valiant efforts that the government had made to retard it is a question that cannot be discussed here—had proceeded so far that adverse Supreme Court decisions could not explode the bombs which they would have exploded had they been handed down a year before. Whether, if decisions from the Court had been demanded and secured at the earliest possible moment, the Court would have been sufficiently prudent to make certain that its shells were duds is another question that cannot be discussed here.

Of the President's power, then, to deal with the emergency there has been no question. Nevertheless serious questions arise as to whether Congress will be willing to give him comparable power again and as to whether, if Congress is willing, the Supreme Court will acquiesce. That will be a problem of the post-election crisis. The powers of the past, however, mean that the coming election, like the election of 1920, will be in considerable measure a referendum on a presidential record and on presidential achievements. American political parties are so inchoate in respect of agreement on principle; so disparate in their make-up because of sectional elements and interests; and so ineffective in compelling loyalty from adherents that it is impossible to have an American referendum on the question of returning a government to power or putting the opposition into office.

This election, however, seems likely to be less impersonal than any for sixteen years. Party and opponent will matter little. To be sure, in 1920 Mr. Wilson was not a candidate. Had he been renominated, the personal issue would have been clearer than it was with Governor Cox loyally defending the Wilson record. The feebleness of that defense was more than a measure of Governor Cox's capacity. It showed his realization of the fact that the country was about to turn against the man who had led it for nearly eight years. The powers that Mr. Wilson possessed were far less than those that President Roosevelt has had, but the electorate was eager to pass adverse judgment on the way in which he had exercised them. One of President Roosevelt's advantages is that he comes up for reëlection after three years and a half, instead of seven years and a half. Most political prophets now believe that the chances decidedly favor him. They would show a sharper division of opinion were the election to be held next March. His popularity attained dizzy heights. A descent was necessary and as it proceeds it meets a rising dissent. There are signs that the President himself takes this view of the matter and that his strategy between now and November will be centered on making no major mistake, on alienating no important interest. In this aim he will endeavor to ally with himself the more vulnerable members of his administration. One who does not wish Republican success may perhaps be permitted to hope that no event between now and November will require executive action which might be

desirable for the country but which momentarily might be construed as a major mistake.

This view of the primary issue of the election is supported by another consideration. No government has ever embarked upon so many experiments as has the American government during the last three years. "If they cannot eat bread, why don't they eat cake?" asked Marie Antoinette, When the bread seemed unpalatable, this administration furnished cake; when something was criticized, the country was given something else to think about. The number of the experiments has caused an extraordinary confusion in the public mind—and in the official mind as well.

Events under the Roosevelt administration have come so thick and fast that the trees obscured the woods from those in the administration who excogitated and implemented policy. They have been so continuously immersed in the details of successive pieces of legislation that they have not had time to examine each piece of legislation as a whole, let alone to consider its place in the general framework of statutory control. So with commentators and critics outside the administration. The sweep has been so rapid that before there is time to consider a situation in relation to what has preceded or is likely to follow it, some new and seemingly more pressing problem clamors for attention. In addition to confusing the public mind, this plethora of political action has stirred up public uneasiness. I am not arguing that some of the experiments need not have been attempted or that some adventures that were abandoned should never have been threatened. Nor am I considering here the question of whether a mandate to bring recovery was unwarrantedly extended to cover reform which impeded recovery. I am simply stating the undeniable consequences of so wide an ambit of governmental activity.

Under the circumstances it is really amazing that *The Literary Digest* poll on whether those polled favored President Roosevelt's policies showed as many favorable replies as it did. One may not be inclined to challenge the decision to go off gold, but may believe that no government ever went off gold in so irresponsible and so fumbling a manner. One may approve of the control of wheat acreage but may believe that the cotton policy has resulted in a permanent loss of foreign markets and that some other method should have been found to subsidize Southern farmers. One may applaud

Federal expenditures for relief but be bitterly hostile to increased appropriations for the army and navy. A similar antinomy could be imagined for most of the attitudes taken by the present administration toward problems of public policy that have been dealt with. The remarkable thing is that the percentage of general support of the policies is as high as apparently it is.

Perhaps it is not entirely unconnected from another factor which goes deep into the question of the ability of American institutions to withstand the forces threatening them. That the strength of the Republican party lay in "the cohesive power of public plunder" was a remark attributed (among others) to Grover Cleveland. The question as to President Roosevelt's strength is this: how cohesive will be the gratitude that various groups will feel for the benefits that they have received from the public treasury? Millions of citizens have been on the relief rolls. The veterans are to get their bonus. Millions of farmers have been paid for not producing crops which in some cases they did not intend to produce. Home owners and farm owners have been given relief on their mortgages. Banks have been bailed out, and railroads and insurance companies have been saved from failure. No government has ever bestowed largesse so generously and so generally. In saying this here I am describing and not criticizing. Will the beneficiaries display gratitude? Will there be any demonstration of the truth of the adage that the feeding hand is sometimes bitten? Will many voters feel as contemptuous and as ungrateful as the waiter who is overtipped? To these questions there will in November be no definite answers. The electorate's vocabulary is too limited. Nevertheless, the results of the election will permit speculations on the answers that have been given, and in advance of the election the questions are proper ones to raise. Their pertinence reinforces the point that the November prebiscite will be a more nonparty and, politically, a more nonprincipled plebiscite than is usually the case.

As related to November, these questions are interesting. On a larger view they are ominous. A few years ago Sir Arthur Salter advanced the view that a much more fundamental evil than the depression itself was "political impotence, the inability of government to govern." He thought that one of the most fundamental causes of this impotence was "the corrupting influence of a policy of changing tariffs." Industries organize and exert pressure.

The result is that "collectively, members of a representative assembly are judges; individually, they become advocates." Since at best "the available resources of intelligence and honesty, in even the most fortunate of countries, are barely sufficient to enable it to deal with its essential problems on the basis of a representative system," this added duty of conferring tariff favors means that "the task of making representative government compatible with honesty and efficiency becomes impossible." There can be no criticism of Sir Arthur Salter's analysis, but an emendation is desirable: the evil is not confined to tariff-making but extends to appropriations for the aid of interests and sections.

This is not to say that tariffs should not be varied or that appropriations should not be made. But both should be done by some method which will prevent logrolling. Control of the purse strings, it is generally conceded, goes to the basis of constitutional government. Where the legislature is the final authority it can make the executive do its bidding, or in the last resort it can shut off supplies. But the manner of control is just as important as the fact because the purse can be opened in a way which demeans the openers, which bestows largesse on recipients who are undeserving and contemptuous, and which disgusts all who do not stand to gain political or financial profit from the transaction. A principal reason why British institutions seem more efficient than other representative governments is that for more than two centuries the House of Commons has worked under a self-denying ordinance which prevents logrolling by members. A standing order provides that the House will not consider any motion for a grant or a charge on the revenue unless it is recommended by the Crown—that is, by the cabinet. It would be difficult to overestimate the effectiveness of this rule in eliminating logrolling. Pressure groups have to work on the cabinet. Hence the claims of the various claimants are coalesced into a program for which the executive takes responsibility. This is still true even though Great Britain has abandoned free trade, and though tariff-making, from Sir Arthur Salter's point of view, raises a problem which did not exist before.

The healthiest encouragement to the efficient working of government in the United States was a comparable, although partial, congressional self-denying ordinance at the outset of the Roosevelt administration. But the

abdication was only temporary. A year later the Independent Offices Bill was passed over the President's veto. It contained amendments providing for veterans' benefits and restored the pay-cuts of Federal employees. The limitations of the 1933 law on Spanish War pensions were removed. Congressional initiative was again untrammeled. To be sure, Congress was disillusioned by the way in which public works appropriations had been parceled out. But for that, responsibility could be fixed. Responsibility cannot be fixed if the legislature initiates its own appropriations or increases those proposed by the executive. After the breach in 1934, another breach was easier. One who fights and runs away lives to fight another day, but to do this in politics means that the next time one fights at a tremendous disadvantage. To fight, and fight even though beaten, is better tactics. To go down with colors flying is the political equivalent of the contact with the earth that was the secret of Antaeus' strength. Hence the spectacle in January, 1936, of both houses rushing to pass the bonus, knowing full well that they would repass it over a formal veto and postponing until later the problem of where the money was to come from, had a significance far greater than the hundreds of millions which will be added to every annual budget. The significance was in respect of the truth Sir Arthur Salter asserted. On such matters, happily or unhappily, the Supreme Court of the United States cannot be a third branch of the legislature. Some of the justices doubtless regret it.

In what I have said there are few, if any, intimations of an impending discussion of principle. Yet the discussion of the principles which shall control its acts is the basis of representative government. The alternative to a decision on principle is personal rule, tempered though it may be, by congressional checks and judicial vetoes. That is what we have had for the last three years, and, as a result of the election, we do not seem likely to get anything else. President Roosevelt's legislative experiments have been accepted by the bulk of the Democratic party without challenge. Some of the party had no alternative but to acquiesce. Some professed intellectual approval, but there was no examination of principles. From the Republican party there was no real challenge. The more conservative of the two major party organizations feared to argue "conservative" principles. It will not so argue in the coming campaign, but it will snipe and endeavor to profit

by reason of the truism that in the United States a strong executive sooner or later seems to wear his welcome out. The Republicans will pray that the wearing out will be completed before rather than after the election. Of course presidential leadership—or, to put it crudely, personal rule—is logically a step on the road towards arbitrary power. That is important, however, only on a long view. The point of immediate importance is that the election will come and go with principle being largely ignored. Yet it is only in the discussion of principle (and by principle I mean the principle of administration as well as of legislation) that there can come that creativeness which all governments need.

Of course specious principles will be trotted out and argued over. Epithets will be used. The experiments since 1933 will be branded as socialistic even though the Socialists refuse to have any truck with them. That may weigh with certain sections of the electorate. I suppose that certain sections of the electorate were alarmed when it was charged that Jefferson (who now is quoted with approval) was inveighed against, as truckling to French revolutionary ideas. We still quote Jefferson and the rest of the founding fathers on the Constitution. When they were ill, they took herbs or had their blood let. We go to hospitals and have X-rays. Apparently it is only in politics that we are expected to rule our lives on the basis of what the dead believed to be the best policy. Politically we bow to old dogmas—that is, to commands which the illustrious dead have given but which they would be too intelligent to repeat were they now alive.

But there is one, largely specious, principle that will be argued between now and November. It will be alleged that the President failed to carry out many of the promises of the Democratic platform of 1932. Every time the refrain of broken promises is sung without full orchestration, the level of political discussion will be lowered. Full orchestration would require for a specific and particular promise an examination of the reasons which are alleged to justify its disregard and an inquiry into the merit and demerit of the contrary measures which have actually been taken. Little of such an examination can be anticipated for the reason that the politician wishes to use only two colors—black and white. He thinks it necessary to reduce his issues to the simplest terms. The slogan of broken promises is so simple that its effectiveness can be hoped for. Yet the simplicity does havoc to the

fairness of the argument. Take a single example—the Democratic pledge to reduce the expenses of the government. It has been desregarded, but it could not have been carried out without permitting men to starve. Humane considerations apart, any administration which was not entirely ignorant would have spent for this purpose because it would have remembered that men do not starve quietly. No one of those who will cry broken promises will dare to say that if he had been president he would have chosen the alternative of allowing men to starve.

To put the matter this way does not deny the right of an electorate to have party programs presented to it and to expect that the candidates who are successful will stick to the promises. But who would demand that the promises be kept if, when the time for action came, it was clear that the consequences of carrying them out would be harmful? The important point is that when President Roosevelt took office in the spring of 1933, the psychological, if not the economic, condition of the country was vastly worse than it had been in the summer of 1932. It was his business to improve that condition, and we should appraise policies not primarily in the light of whether they were promised for or against, but rather on the basis of whether greater care and intelligence should not have been used in their conception and greater skill in their execution.

Nowadays no voice is lifted in defence of mandated deputies, or representatives, that is to say, who are under binding instructions from parties or economic interests to vote in a particular way and no other. A measure of party regularity is desirable, but it should not be made hard and fast either in respect of individuals or the programs of leaders. When the postwar European constitutions were adopted, many of them provided that persons elected to the legislative assembly should be bound only by their own consciences and not by instructions. Manifestly this is essential if representative institutions are to work well. Their essence is that compromise shall be possible; and if a sufficient number of deputies are bound by mandates, there can be no compromise but only deadlock. Moreover, especially in a day when the words, *crisis* and *catastrophe,* are in the current vocabulary of politics, it is important that leaders educate their followers and be prepared to announce that, because of changed conditions, it would be improper to carry out certain promises. From time to time, parties modify

their programs. Surely it cannot be maintained that change is permitted only when a quadrennial manifesto is being drafted and not when the needs of the country demand it. Campaign pledges, however, are important to this extent, and the point is important: the burden of proof should be on those who disregard pledges to show that changed conditions have warranted a change of policy. Hence a party which uses what it believes to be intelligence at the price of disregarding promises puts itself on the defensive. That is as it should be. On the other hand, as Emerson said, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines." Those who, during the coming months, cry broken promises and nothing more will say, in effect, that they prefer the foolishness of consistency to the wisdom of change. President Roosevelt can answer that the patient for whom he was prescribing in the summer of 1932 seemed to have influenza and that by March, 1933, it had pneumonia.

Thus far in this analysis there have been few notes of optimism, and there is no reason why the conclusion should attempt to change the tone. It is clear that the task of the presidency after November will be more burdensome than the task during the last two years. It is said that in France when the political pendulum swings from left to right, it swings from the heart to the pocket. The parties of the left have their interest on things dear to the heart and thereby empty the pocket. When the pocket must be replenished the swing goes away from the left. Will there be a swing of the political pendulum in the United States? The present indications are that Mr. Roosevelt bids fair to be reëlected. Matters dear to the heart have been well cared for by him, but the pocket is empty. Either he or his successor will have to replenish it. In doing this no president can rise to dizzy heights of popularity. If Mr. Roosevelt is reëlected there can be no new patronage. On the contrary, agencies will have to be dismantled or at least reduced in personnel. New taxes will have to be imposed and existing taxes will have to be increased. Should a Republican be elected, there will be no discernible swing of the pendulum of principle. A Republican might attempt to act on Hamilton's belief, that "to reverse and undo what has been done by a predecessor is very often considered by a successor as the best proof he can give of his own capacity and desert"; but the manner of the undoing would differ principally in motive from the undoing

hat President Roosevelt would be forced to attempt. The Republican vould want to act. President Roosevelt would be compelled to do so. Neither would have much heart in doing the things which must be done.

Whether or not there is a change in the tenancy of the White House, he occupant will undoubtedly ponder certain mythological stories. He nay think of Pandora's box and endeavor to console himself by remember- ng that, after the evils had escaped, hope was left. Or he may think of he members of Ulysses' crew who thought that a bag given their chieftain by Aeolus contained great treasures. Instead the bag contained winds and so, when the bag was opened while Ulysses slept the ships were driven far rom their course and back again to the island that they had just left. The nonarch of that island was indignant and refused to assist them further. Hence the crew had to row without the aid of sail. The inappositeness of his fable consists in the fact that the ships were driven back to the spot hey had left. The danger is that when a political bag is opened, the ship of state is driven further and further on an uncharted course.

All this goes to say that the real question is that of American repre- entative institutions' doing an efficient job internally. But if democratic governments are to overcome the dangers that threaten them, they must do a good job internationally as well. They must be able to create and carry out policies which will permit enough political appeasement to foster economic recovery. Economic dangers pave the way for arbitrary government. Arbitrary governments so alarm each other and governments less arbitrary hat international measures to alleviate economic distress seem to be mpossible. This is the vicious circle. Only by breaking it can representative governments show that they are competent to deal with the crisis that con- fronts them.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY

Frank Lawrence Owsley

NEITHER CONGRESS, President, nor Supreme Court knows at this moment what is the Constitution of the United States; and it can hardly be proved that the remaining 130,000,000 inhabitants of the United States possess any greater certainty about their Constitution than the three departments of the Federal government which are sworn to uphold, maintain, and defend it. We are indeed in a constitutional fog which has constantly grown thicker since the original document was presented to the country for ratification in 1787.

Let me point out a few of the leading factors which have caused the people and their organs of government to become thus enveloped. It will be recalled that the convention which drew up the Federal Constitution in 1787 was in essence a revolutionary, secessionist body. Its actions were in violation of state instructions and of the Articles of Confederation, which, at the time, were the Constitution of the United States. It performed its work in secret, and the document which it presented to the country in 1787, while it contained many fine principles of government, was essentially reactionary and undemocratic. The president was to be chosen by uninstructed electors, who in turn were to be chosen either by a suffrage based upon property qualifications or by state legislatures based upon a similar suffrage. The Federal senate was to be elected by these same legislatures, which usually held office—as today in many states—by the approbation of the county court or some other local political hierarchy

which was in practice self-perpetuating. The Federal judiciary was to be chosen by the president with the consent of the senate. The social philosophy of the Constitution was in keeping with its undemocratic mechanism. In short, the original Constitution was so contrived as to remove the Federal government as far as possible from the sound of *vox populi* and to place it in the hands of the few men of wealth.

The vote upon this document could scarcely be called a plebiscite: out of a population of 4,000,000 or more, only about 165,000 voted. Cajolery, trickery, and bribery were used to obtain ratification, and even so, the margin in favor of ratification was only a few thousand. A constitution obtained by such methods and one which repudiated many of the fundamental principles for which the American Revolution had been fought only a few years before could not be regarded by its contemporaries, or by a well-informed, intelligent person today, as *sacrosanct* or as falling within the same category as the Ten Commandments.

The impending dissolution of the American State and reconquest by England brought many liberal leaders like James Madison to support such a constitution. But even so—and despite the doubtful methods used to obtain ratification—the friends of the Constitution would have failed had they not pledged the immediate incorporation into the Constitution of the first ten amendments, which contain, to a great extent, the Bill of Rights, or the rights of man, for which the intellectual leaders of the American Revolution had contended, and for which the common man had thought the War was fought. But the incorporation of the rights of man within a document reactionary in its philosophy of human society as well as in its mechanism could only thicken the fog which had already been raised. On the face of it, it appears to have been an attempt to fuse in one short charter the philosophy of plutocracy and that of democracy, a fusion which was the impossible proverbial mixture of oil and water. In reality, as I have suggested, it was the hope of the old revolutionary leaders, soon to be called Jeffersonians, that the Bill of Rights would, by mere force of principle, correct the undemocratic features of the main body of the Constitution. Tacked on at the end and forming no organic part of the whole, the Bill of Rights was a liberal postscript added to an illiberal document.

Fortunately for the plutocratic philosophy that government is in essence the executive committee of great wealth, the Federalists, under the leadership of Alexander Hamilton, secured control of the executive branch of the government for twelve years and the legislative during most of this time. But most fortunately of all, the Federalists for forty years held possession of the judiciary, which arrogated to itself the power to declare laws of Congress unconstitutional and in general to declare the law and the Constitution. For a brief period, under Chief Justice Taney, the Jeffersonians gained control of the Court. With the Civil War the Court came again under the control of jurists who professed the Hamiltonian philosophy.

After the Civil War, during so-called Reconstruction, the Federalists, now bearing the Jeffersonian name "Republican," obtained two amendments, the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth, which were intended to change, and did change to a certain extent, the fundamental nature of the original Constitution. Now, all the historians of Reconstruction except three negro writers and one carpetbag ex-governor agree that these two amendments were incorporated into the Federal Constitution by open fraud and violence supported by Federal troops in the South, and congressional legislation which even the Federalist Supreme Court would have thrown out had it not been intimidated by the Radical leaders. Regardless of what may be thought of the desirability of such amendments—and that irrelevant question is not to be raised here—no self-respecting, well-informed American can look with reverence upon this portion of the Federal document. But I wish to call attention, in passing, to the fact that it is the Fourteenth Amendment which corporate wealth holds next to the Jeffersonian Fifth Amendment, most sacred and most dear. Among other things, the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees that the state can deprive no person of life, liberty, and property without due process of law, while the Fifth Amendment prohibits the Federal government from depriving any person of life, liberty, and property without due process of law. By giving a corporation the status of a person, the Federalist judiciary has caused these colossal bodies of organized wealth to become the undefeated champions of personal liberty! The irony of these two amendments is withering. One was honorably secured by the Jeffersonians as a safeguard for the liberty of

the white man; the other, violently and corruptly secured by the Republicans, ostensibly in behalf of the liberty of the black man: both—like other Jeffersonian amendments in behalf of human liberty—have been erected by the Supreme Court, not into bulwarks of human freedom, but into impregnable fortresses of corporate wealth.

I have pointed out, thus far, various factors which have obscured the meaning of the original Federal Constitution and the Jeffersonian amendments, and which deprive that document of any claim to sacredness: the unconstitutional procedure of the Convention of 1787; the secrecy of its operations; the trickery and fraud used in the adoption of the Constitution (1787-9) and in the adoption of the Reconstruction amendments; the packing of the judiciary with Federalists when Jefferson was elected; the doubtful assumption of power by the Supreme Court to declare a Federal law unconstitutional; and above all, the interpretation placed upon the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. Another factor of paramount importance in darkening the glass through which we view the Constitution is, or was, the sectional interpretation of the original document. One has only to remember New England's threats of secession during the Jeffersonian Embargo, or the War of 1812, or even at the annexation of Texas; or the Southern threat of secession in the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, the Nullification movement, and the final secession in 1860—all centering around the meaning of the Constitution—in order to see that sectional interpretation was a major factor up until 1865, in creating doubt as to the meaning of the Constitution.

I wish to comment further upon the rôle of the Supreme Court in befogging the meaning of the original Constitution and the amendments. Under the Hamiltonian philosophy that government is run for and by the rich, the supreme judiciary has stretched the Constitution of 1787 and the amendments in many different directions; meanings have been read between the lines, into the lines, and beyond the lines; lines have been added, subtracted, divided, and multiplied to fit the exigencies of the occasion and to benefit great wealth (and destroy small wealth). One reads many of these decisions and looks about himself in vain for a familiar constitutional landmark. The Constitution, he feels, has been made to serve God and Mammon, human liberty and human bondage. The Supreme

Court has rendered hundreds of decisions which have defined the Constitution in all its aspects; yet, despite the fact that this high court has usually been in the hands of jurists who are disciples of Hamilton, the hundreds of decisions which it has rendered are consistent chiefly in this one principle: excessive amiability toward those who possess great wealth and great indifference toward those who own nothing or small private properties. Outside of this excessive amiability to great wealth, the decisions of the Supreme Court, which cover about 20,000 pages and over 290 volumes, are confusion and contradiction piled upon confusion and contradiction: here we behold a constitutional tower of Babel. Yet it is these 20,000 pages of decisions, rather than the document printed in the backs of our textbooks, which are the working constitution of the United States. It is out of this welter of decisions that the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Federal government select the precedents on which they estimate the constitutionality of a bill or law. It is possible, of course, to go back to the original Constitution itself and ignore the principle of *stare decisis*; but it is too much to expect of our jurists. The Supreme Court has determined and will determine the constitutionality of a measure in accordance with its social and political philosophy, for the justices will have little difficulty in finding precedents to support their positions. The personnel of the great judiciary determines everything. In view of this I am strongly tempted to assert that the Constitution of the United States is not the original document adopted in 1789 or the 20,000 pages of decisions, but the Supreme Court itself. Such an assertion would be equivalent to saying that we are living under a judicial despotism.

This perennial uncertainty as to what is our constitution has been one of the most dangerous and disruptive forces in our history; and now that the economic, social, and political systems of the world are in chaos, such uncertainty adds to the uneasiness among all classes. While the Hamiltonians have the Court today and are rejoicing that the Constitution has been saved, people are asking, "What constitution?" Tomorrow, the Jeffersonians may control the Court and save still another constitution. But eventually the fascists or communists may gain control of the Court, and what constitution will they save?

It seems impossible to escape the conclusion that we need a new constitution which will reconstruct the Federal government from center to circumference. Such a reconstruction must take into consideration the realities of American life, past and present; and one of the greatest realities is sectionalism or regionalism; and above all, it must be based upon the eternal verity that while man must eat, he does not live by bread alone.

II

While I wish to put myself on record here as being an advocate of the reconstruction of the American State, and most particularly the Federal judiciary in all its branches, it is not my purpose in this essay to propose a plan of reconstruction. Rather do I wish to urge this: it is high time that we—and this applies most pertinently to our judiciary—reëxamine the principles upon which the American State was founded in 1776. Lincoln and Seward, as spokesmen for those interests which found the Constitution as interpreted under the Jeffersonian Chief Justice Taney too narrow for their full expansion, called upon a "higher law," and it was upon this "higher law" that the Republican Party came into power. The interests which Seward consciously and Lincoln, perhaps innocently, represented were industrial and corporate wealth, located chiefly in the East. These great industrial and financial groups had set good, but ill-informed, men upon a crusade against slavery in the South, where it was already destined through economic causes to disappear rapidly. The ends of abolition could not be obtained within the Constitution; so the "higher law" was invoked. It was only after Lincoln's death that it became apparent that the "higher law" had been invoked to bring freedom and happiness, not to the slave, but rather to the great bankers, railroad magnates, and industrialists—freedom to gambol between the great walls of the Fourteenth and Fifth Amendments! In short, it was in reality the industrialists and corporations who invoked the "higher law" to gain control of the national government and make it over according to their desire. The abolitionists were futile, ill-informed idealists who were ruthlessly brushed aside when their services were no longer useful. Today, because we do not know what is the Constitution—unless it be the Supreme Court—and because if it were the simple document of 1787 it would be absolutely inadequate and

would always have been so, even during the horse-and-buggy stage, we invoke the "higher law" against those same interests who falsely invoked it to destroy the South and reduce both South and West to the status of proconsular provinces of the old Roman Empire. The "higher law" is inherent in the fundamental principles upon which the American State was founded, the early American principles which became known, as I have said, as Jeffersonian principles. It is time that we reëxamine and reassess these principles. Such principles, thus disinterred, should control the constitutional reconstruction of the United States, which must ultimately come; and in the meanwhile they must be made to guide our political action and our conduct of government. Otherwise we cannot escape the communist or fascist totalitarian state.

The whole body of founding fathers subscribed to these principles, to this "higher law," some with mental reservations, others with deathless devotion. Among the greatest of these were: James Otis and Samuel Adams of Massachusetts; George Mason, Patrick Henry, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia; John Dickinson of Pennsylvania; and Christopher Gadsden of South Carolina. The leadership of Thomas Jefferson, which lasted over half a century, attached his name to these principles. He embodies and symbolizes them. These principles upon which the American State was founded fall into one great category which in turn contains at least five cardinal principles; from these five cardinal principles numerous other principles stem like the branches of a tree. This great category was and is the absolute denial of the totalitarian state: neither kings nor parliaments, foreign or domestic, had complete sovereignty over the individual. "Thus far shalt thou go and no further" was said to government. The founding fathers drew their principles from the experience of the English race; from the Anglo-Saxon days when God was supposed to have made the laws and the king and his council only declared what they were; from the charter of Henry I, who acknowledged the supremacy of immemorial customs and laws; from King John, who signed the Magna Carta; and from all the kings who came after him who, in a similar fashion, admitted that their sovereignty over their subjects was limited. The jurists Coke, Littleton, and Blackstone confirmed the limitation of sovereignty, and Browne, Hobbes, Milton, and Locke, the philosophers, stated in broad

abstract terms the theories of limited sovereignty. The philosophers of the American Revolution stated these principles more clearly, and as I have said, they made these principles the foundation of the American State. They were called "natural rights." There were five great rights which no government could legitimately destroy: the right to life; the right to liberty; the right to property; the right to the pursuits of happiness (so long as the exercise of this right did not encroach upon the rights of others); and the right to self-government—that is, government was made to serve man, man was not made to serve government, and when government failed to serve man it should be changed, peaceably if possible, forcibly if need be.

These principles, as I have said, were partly repudiated by Alexander Hamilton and many of his followers; but on the other hand, Jefferson and many of his colleagues clung to the original American doctrines and founded a party upon them. There can be no doubt that liberty in all its magnificent meaning was to Jefferson the greatest of the five principles; liberty was indeed the flowering, and end of being, of the other cardinal principles; freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, all the things, indeed, which we call personal liberty, were parts of that freedom which Jefferson and his colleagues visualized. The other four principles were both ends in themselves and instruments by which *liberty* could be secured. What seem to be three additional principles which have been attached to Jeffersonianism almost to the exclusion of the others are state rights, strict construction, and *laissez faire*. Any student of Jefferson and his like-minded colleagues is aware that the doctrine of state rights was only another form for the cardinal principle of self-government. The knowledge gained from experience as English colonists demonstrated irrefutably to these men that government from a great distance, by legislators not equally affected by their laws with the people for whom they were legislating, was ignorant government because it had no understanding of the local situation; and it was despotic government because the opinion and wishes of the people for whom the laws were passed were not considered or even known. Any believer, then, in the right of a people to govern themselves would naturally adhere in the early days of our history to the doctrine of state rights. This doctrine was also an instrument by which the other Jeffersonian principles could be obtained or protected;

particularly so when the Hamiltonian philosophy dominated the government. The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the Nullification movement are good illustrations of the use of state rights and state sovereignty as defense weapons, for sectional protection as well as for the protection of the five cardinal principles already enumerated as the basic Jeffersonian principles.

The strict construction doctrine was primarily an instrument of defense against the Hamiltonian philosophy. Like state rights it was meant to preserve local and, therefore, self-government; and uphold the other great principles of human rights. It was not an end or a virtue in itself, for when Jefferson and his successors were in power they violated the doctrine of strict construction and added to the territory of the United States until it reached the Pacific, and they undertook many other measures which only a loose construction of the Constitution could justify. What I wish to make clear is that state rights and strict construction either were aspects of the great principles of the right of self-government or were defense weapons against what the Jeffersonians believed to be inimical to the basic principles of the American State. If Jefferson and Samuel Adams were here today they would hardly be state rights advocates. They would, probably, according to their own logic, advocate *regional governments;* and realists as they were, they would hardly be able to look at the 290 odd volumes of Supreme Court decisions and remain strict constructionists. Without doubt they would demand a new constitution which guaranteed unequivocally the basic principles of democracy.

Jefferson's doctrine of *laissez faire,* that the best government was the one which governed least, has been most ironically appropriated by the Hamiltonians, just as have been the Fifth Amendment and the Fourteenth, as another sanctuary for great wealth. To hear the United States Chamber of Commerce or the House of Morgan or the Liberty League quote Jefferson, whom they hate, to prove that government should not interfere with business, is the perfect example of the Devil's well known facility in quoting Scripture. There is one part of Jefferson's statement concerning the so-called *laissez faire* doctrine which the corporations and their political representatives fail to quote: he specified that there should be enough government to prevent men from injuring one another. It may be supposed that in a simple

agricultural society where land and natural resources were plentiful and every factory hand could quit his job and move West, little national or state government would be necessary. Such has often been the assumption of historians who have not studied closely the career of Jefferson and that of his aides. It is thus that Jefferson's so-called *laissez faire* doctrine has so often been explained. But a careful study of Jefferson will disclose that he found a tremendous amount of government intervention necessary, even in an agricultural society, to prevent men from injuring one another. Jefferson's career as a legislator in Virginia during the American Revolution and as President of the United States should be contemplated by those who quote the great democrat in support of the nonintervention of government. Jefferson, Pendleton, and Wythe drew up a new code which was calculated eventually under the leadership of Jefferson, Mason, and Madison to revolutionize the social and economic fabric of Virginia. The laws of primogeniture and entail were abolished, with the result that a redistribution of landed property took place not unlike that which resulted from the French Revolution. Jefferson was thoroughly familiar with the destruction of the yeomanry in England by entail, primogeniture, and the enclosure acts. Tidewater Virginia was in his day rapidly developing into a country not unlike England, which Goldsmith was describing as a land "where wealth accumulates and men decay." Under the influence of Jefferson the Episcopalian Church was disestablished, its property appropriated; he introduced bills to establish a system of public schools the like of which had not been dreamed of since the days of Plato. He lived to see the University and part of the lower system established. The embargo of 1808-9 upon all commerce, laid down at the behest of Jefferson as president, was the strongest intervention of government in business known in America till 1917. These are fundamental illustrations of the Jeffersonian conception of the rôle of government in the affairs of man. He was unafraid of government except when it was in the hands of the enemies of free government.

I have said that the cardinal principles of the Jeffersonian or early American doctrines of government, were the rights to life, liberty, pursuits of happiness, self-government, and property, and that these rights were great ends in themselves, and that in turn each was an instrument to secure

the others. The greatest of these instruments, indeed, the *sine qua non,* for making possible the other rights, was the right to own property. If they had thought of the great political principles enumerated as stones in the arch which upholds the state, then the Jeffersonians would have considered private property as the keystone of the arch, without which the whole thing must fall. But what was the Jeffersonian conception of private property: not great corporations, trusts, monopolies, banks, or princely estates —in brief, not great wealth concentrated in the hands of the few, but land and other property held or obtainable by all self-respecting men. Such property thus widely held must, of course, in the very nature of things, be *personally controlled,* or it would cease to have much value as the basic instrumentation of the right to life, liberty, the pursuits of happiness, and self-government. The *ownership* and *control* of productive property sufficient for a livelihood gave a man and his family a sense of economic security; it made him independent; he was a real citizen, for he could cast his franchise without fear and could protect the basic principles of his government. Jefferson regarded stocks and bonds as an insecure economic basis for a free state, for even in the eighteenth century directors and presidents of corporations understood, perfectly, the art of avoiding the payment of dividends to small stockholders who had no voice in directing the management of the business. The insecurity of citizens who depended upon such property over which they no longer had control was doubtless a strong factor in the Jeffersonian advocacy of the agrarian state. Perhaps the Jeffersonians believed that city life was not a good life, but the loss of economic independence and security which accompanied this life was what made the great Virginian and his colleagues fear urbanization and look upon land as the best form of private property and the only safe basis of a free state.

The Hamiltonian conception of property was great wealth concentrated in a few hands, and he and his disciple Marshall and their disciples proposed, and propose, that government and society be run in the interest of the rich and the well-born. Under the Hamiltonian philosophy, Dives may throw crumbs to Lazarus and permit his dogs to lick the sores of Lazarus; but that is the end of his obligation.

If one combines the economic and social unbalance created by tech-

nological development with the friendliness of government to great wealth, which I have just sketched, he has in his hands the principle factors which have produced conditions from the worst consequences of which we may not be able to escape. Primarily as a result of government by and for great wealth, private property has almost been destroyed. Forty or fifty million American citizens are living on an economic level hardly more comfortable and less secure than that of the caveman of twenty thousand years ago. Another fifty million are desperately, and with a constant sense of insecurity, struggling to meet the daily needs of existence. Perhaps the other twenty or thirty million are living well, but I challenge that. As for the two hundred corporations and the few thousand men who own the bulk of the resources of the United States, at least it can be said that they are able to meet their desires; but they are living in great insecurity because they fear that they will be heavily taxed, and that there may be danger of communism. From top to bottom, from rich to poor, there is a feeling of insecurity. No one but a fool feels safe.

In simple words let me repeat that private property, widely distributed, which formed the basis of the early American State has all but disappeared. The keystone of the arch which supported the free state, the property state, which was able to challenge the theory of the totalitarian state, whether the absolutism of a monarch by divine rights, an absolutist British Parliament, or a modern fascist or communist state, is crumbling. With the disappearance of private property has disappeared much of the popular reverence for property. The average man does not truly know what property is. To him—in a vague way—it is something he can touch or see or comprehend with his senses; but he is dispossessed of such. Stocks and bonds and banks and securities are meaningless. He owns none and his friends own none. In any case, he has no control over his property.

The propertyless folk of Italy, Russia, Germany, and even Japan have given up claims to freedom, or any of the human rights, which the Jeffersonians thought of as the natural rights of man, in exchange for economic and social security or promise of such security. In America, where the tradition of freedom still persists, such an exchange would not be made so readily and openly; yet millions—I dare not contemplate how many millions—of Americans are this day ready to trade in (as they would trade

in the battered remains of an old car which will not run and which they doubt can be made to run) the residue of abstract liberty which they still may lay claim to, in exchange for bread and circuses; and millions more are half decided, while the great mass of American people must, within no distant time, come to the conclusion that it is better to be well-fed slaves with their families secure than to cling to a freedom which leaves them upon the streets and their children to die of exposure or grow up as beggars, and their franchise to be bought for a cup of coffee.

The right to life, the right to liberty, the right to the pursuit of happiness, the right to govern oneself, the right to own property—all natural rights according to the founders of America, beyond which the state cannot go, which deny the complete sovereignty of the state, must give way to the fascist or communist totalitarian state, which guarantees security and denies freedom, unless private property is put back into the hands of the disinherited American people.

HOOVER'S APOLOGIA: AN AUDACIOUS TORTURING OF HISTORY

John T. Flynn

Cassius: *But it is doubtful yet,*
Whether Caesar will come forth today, or no;
For he is superstitious grown of late;
Quite from the main opinion he held once
Of fantasy, of dreams, and ceremonies:
It may be, these apparent prodigies,
The unaccustom'd terror of this night,
And the persuasion of his augurers,
May hold him from the Capitol today.

Decius: *Never fear that: if he be so resolv'd*
I can o'ersway him; for he loves to hear
That unicorns may be betray'd with trees,
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,
Lions with toils, and men with flatterers . . .

(*Julius Caesar,* Act II, Scene i)

MR. WALTER H. NEWTON and Professor William Starr Myers have produced a volume which they call *The Hoover Administration* (Scribner's, $3.50) and which they are pleased to describe further as a "documented narrative."

Mr. Newton is a politician, an ex-congressman and ex-member of Mr. Hoover's secretariat, in which body he performed the duties of chief buttonholer for the President on Capitol Hill. Dr. Myers is a professor of history and politics in Princeton University. To the politician, of course, the rôle of propagandist and candidatorial shirt-stuffer is a normal function. To

a professor of history and politics, however, it is a strange exercise, to say the least. For this book is a piece of inspired propaganda, as part of the struggle which the former president is now making to rehabilitate his shattered reputation. It is "documented" only to the extent that it draws heavily and ceaselessly—page after page—upon those ponderous and lumbering addresses and messages of Mr. Hoover himself during his four years in the White House. There are 542 pages of text in the book. Here was ample territory over which to set up proofs, data, facts to prove the thesis that Hoover had met the storm with flawless seamanship and navigation; that he had ridden the whirlwinds and conquered the hurricane; and that the nation was about to float out into the tranquil waters of recovery when Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democrats threw the sea into a fresh uproar. But instead of proof, these valuable pages are used up with endless excerpts from Hoover's speeches, re-assertions and reiterations of his already oft-repeated explanations of the depression.

As you read these heavy pages you become aware of the fact that you are once more in the presence of the superman the world supposed Mr. Hoover to be before his election. He foresees all, perceives all, understands all, manages all with infinite wisdom and almost perfect success. This view of history is a little difficult to fit into the pattern with some other facts. Thus, Mr. Hoover entered office in March, 1929. In his campaign for the presidency he saw the nation in a state of the profoundest economic peace. The poorhouse, the age-old stain upon civilized society, was about to disappear. And from what forces? Through the force of the "policies which have been pursued during the last eight years." It is abundantly clear that in November, 1928, this amazing prophet did not see the doom which stalked ahead of him and his country, though the evil energies which were preparing the catastrophe were visible enough to any number of economists.

When the catastrophe came and ran its course through three years and six months of Mr. Hoover's four years in office, it turned out to be, according to the Newton-Myers interpretation, not one depression, but three separate depressions. I should say according to Mr. Hoover, for it is his philosophies and his interpretations that are passed on to us by the collaborators.

The first depression began in October, 1929, and lasted until the fall of 1931. This is called the domestic collapse. It was caused by the War and the post-war boom conditions. The second depression began in the fall of 1931 and ended in the summer of 1932. It is called the European depression. It was due wholly to conditions in Germany, France, and England. The third depression, called the political depression, began in the end of 1933 and was caused by Franklin D. Roosevelt and his Democratic hosts.

In this diagnosis one will perceive at once with some surprise first, that Mr. Hoover and his party had nothing to do with any of these three collapses, and secondly, that the two slumps which came during the period of his power were completely and masterfully whipped by him, almost single-handed.

There is, to put it mildly, something ungracious about this amazing historical invention. The one man in the world who wielded vast power during those years was Herbert Hoover. But he was, it seems, the one man who was utterly and completely free of blame. The vast and humbling wreck which came about his ears in its final tragic crisis in March, 1933, has left upon his soul, apparently, not one vague mark of humility. He did everything in precisely the right way. His opponents did everything in precisely the wrong way. Everybody else in the world was at fault—Europe, England for going off the gold standard and, of course, finally Franklin D. Roosevelt, who did not come upon the scene until the chaotic mess was laid in his lap as he assumed the presidency.

Even Mr. Hoover's colleagues in the Coolidge administration were not wholly without reproach. He recognizes, of course, since it is inescapable, that the boom of the 'twenties had something to do with the depression. And he recognizes also that the boom consisted in the orgy of credit inflation worked up by business. This happened under Calvin Coolidge. Obviously the Democrats can't be blamed for that. So Mr. Hoover points his finger at the Federal Reserve Board. The Reserve Board began flirting with Great Britain and the Bank of England in a series of negotiations looking toward an *entente* under which the Board would assist England to stabilize the pound and go back on gold. When Hoover heard of these conferences he warned the Board that it would lead to inflation and final collapse. Nothing was done then. But later, when the deal was consummated, it

was done behind Hoover's back. It was put over when for five months he was absent in the South moving 1,500,000 people from the flooded areas in the Mississippi Valley.

A new pretension is introduced by the authors into the history of the panic of 1929. It will be remembered that in November, 1929, the President began calling conferences of railroad presidents, industrialists, and labor leaders to deal with the crash. It has been generally supposed that Mr. Hoover took the view in the first stages of the panic that this was a maladjustment precipitated by the crisis in the speculative boom, that all was fundamentally well, and that the crash was, after a fashion, not a bad thing; that business merely had to keep its head and not seize the market collapse as an excuse for cutting wages; that in fact all would presently be on an even keel again.

Messrs. Newton and Myers tell a very different story. On November 21, the President called a number of leaders in industry to the cabinet room of the White House. The discussions were confidential and now the authors tell us that in outlining the situation to these gentlemen, the President told them the crisis was more serious than a mere stock market crash, "that no one could measure the problem before us or the depth of the disaster, that the depression must last for some time and that he warned them that we could expect a long and difficult period *at best,* that there would be much liquidation of values, debts and prices with heavy penalties on the nation, and that no one could at this time measure the destructive forces we must meet."

Of course, this version of the incident is designed to make it appear that the President then did understand the nature of the crisis and did not share the popular illusion that the collapse was merely a sort of self-adjusting interval.

I do not like to say so, but I am compelled to assert that I do not believe this account. If it is true it ought to be susceptible of proof. Were those discussions taken down in shorthand? Is there an authoritative report? If there is, I challenge the authors and President Hoover to produce it. Men who were present at that conference have said that it was perfectly plain to them when the President asked their views, that they were expected to deliver themselves of expressions of confidence.

Furthermore, if the President held at that time that we were in for a long and hard pull against destructive forces so powerful that we could not foresee their strength, one is put to it to explain the long series of public statements given out by the President and his cabinet members assuring the nation that all was well, that the nation had merely suffered a slight readjustment, and that presently, all the better for the purge, it would resume its onward march to new prosperity.

The story which this volume has to tell is revealed to its readers in a long series of chronological entries, beginning with a minor incident on March 6, 1929, and ending with the inauguration of Mr. Roosevelt. It consists chiefly of excerpts and long portions from Mr. Hoover's addresses, letters, and statements. To this extent only is it documented. Throughout, the narrative bristles with some naïve assertions made in all innocence. For instance, the authors declare with a sort of childlike assurance that the depression began with the stock market collapse of 1929. They point out, also, as if it were a settled fact, that one of the causes of the collapse was the tax on capital gains. The pioneer in that theory was Mr. Charles Mitchell, of dubious memory, Chairman of the National City Bank. The argument is that during the late 'twenties, holders of stocks were afraid to sell them and convert their gains into realized profits because of the enormous capital gains tax which would seriously reduce those profits. Thus we had an abnormal scarcity of goods and securities. The well-known fact that men did sell and rebuy and sell over and over again their securities as never before in history is ignored as if it never occurred in order to support this foolish theory, invented by one of the greatest market speculators to get rid of the capital gains tax. Stated simply, this nation was plunged into this mighty scourge of economic depression because the profits of stock gamblers were taxed.

The book, of course, accepts as if it were a fact of history attested by divine revelation, that the depression was ended in 1931 and that in the summer, the collapse of the Creditanstalt Bank of Austria set in motion a train of events which threw us back into the slump. The failure of this bank, unquestionably had important reverberations in Europe. Hoover insists that it forced Germany to default and that the repercussions of this forced England off the gold standard in September. This event—England's

abandonment of the gold standard—sent its temblors throughout the world. Because of it, a fresh series of bank failures occurred in this country. A thousand banks failed in three months. The bank panic was begun, and Mr. Hoover had to go to work all over again to whip the depression once more. The depression, it seems, was like one of those durable prize fighters who are hit upon the chin and sent to the canvas over and over and keep on getting up for more. The depression simply did not know when it was licked. The story of these years was a great war between Hoover and the depression, with Hoover winning every battle. But somehow the news of these victories, though frequently announced by the President, never got around. Banks kept on failing just as if the depression had won. Employers kept on firing men. Industries kept on closing down. In the summer of 1931, when the depression was knocked down first, there were 8,000,000 people out of work. But before the summer was over, right in the midst of the victory, there were another 700,000 unemployed. Again in 1932, in January, just before the depression was knocked down for the second time, there were 11,400,000 jobless. But by summer, when it was licked, the number was over 13,000,000. It was the most stupid depression that ever was knocked down.

However, Mr. Hoover's claim that the depression got a fresh start from the Austrian failure is the merest moonshine. That theory originated with Sir Arthur Salter, who visited this country shortly after that event. Things were getting worse. Hoover had been blaming the depression on the War. Sir Arthur arrived in the nick of time and explained to the President and Ogden Mills that it was the Austrian bank's failure and the general disorganization in Europe that had caused the trouble. From that time on the President began calling the depression a world calamity. If it was caused by the War, that left Mr. Hoover out. He didn't start the War. But the thing was getting so bad, some better explanation had to be found. Sir Arthur supplied it. It was a world depression. It originated in causes outside our boundaries, as Mr. Hoover expressed it at the time. And of course Mr. Hoover couldn't control economic forces outside America; so that left him still exculpated.

The explanation leaves something to be desired. One inescapable point is this. If the Austrian failure was such a world-damaging event,

if England's going off the gold standard, as a consequence, was a force of such destructive energy that it knocked a thousand banks in America over, then why, one may ask, didn't it bowl over a bank or two in England? Why didn't it destroy a bank in Canada? The same force hit England and Canada. But there the banks stood firm. Here a thousand fell in three months. The wind and the waves beat upon two houses. One stood firm. One went down. One house was built upon a rock. The other was built upon sand. The banking system of America was built upon sand. And those thousand banks failed in the three months following September, not because of England's flight from gold, but because it was just a continuation of what had been happening right along. The banks did not begin to fail in September. They had been exploding like firecrackers for several years. The explosions became cumulative and by September the whole system was ready for collapse.

It was saved for the time being, as the authors claim, by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. This was set up by Mr. Hoover. It saved banks by the very simple expedient of handing them all the money they needed to meet the demands of their depositors. You can save any bank that way. But you can't keep it up. And you don't make the bank healthy. In the end they went to pieces just as if they never had been saved.

The next claim made in the book is that the depression was ended in the summer of 1932. The world depression ended, and we began to pick up along with the rest of the world. Now if this is true—if we began to improve with world improvement and if Mr. Hoover was not responsible for the world depression which had blown us down and could not help it—then it must follow that he was equally powerless to effect our improvement.

As a matter of fact, the depression, of course, did not end in the summer of 1932. During the campaign, which was under way that spring and summer, Mr. Hoover, as he sped through the country on his special train, kept issuing bulletins, like war communiques, announcing fresh victories over the depression.

The facts are simple enough. The depression, charted on a board, is not pictured by a straight descending line. The economic machine did not move down at a steady uninterrupted pace. It sank down and then rose

a little to sink down again. The seasons still exerted their customary influence on business. Employment decreased each summer and increased each spring as the building industry and the farmers went up and then down to new depths. But every time there was a brief pause in the descent, Mr. Hoover claimed that the depression was over. He was, of course, promptly challenged by the ruthless course of events as the downward spiral resumed. There was a brief pause in 1932, and once again he claimed that the depression was over. When the usual decline got under way, he was in a position to blame that on the election and the Democrats, as he had blamed the interruption in 1931 on Europe. He has never explained the similar interruption of 1930.

A glance at employment figures for 1932 will show how much recovery there was in America. These are the figures worked out by Mr. Robert R. Nathan, an economist in the Department of Commerce, whose figures were obtained from studies made for the Social Security Board. They are far more conservative than the figures of the American Federation of Labor. Here they are by months:

1932	Employment
January	37,943,000
February	37,559,000
March	37,280,000
April	37,067,000
May	36,677,000
June	36,423,000
July	36,143,000
August	35,987,000
September	36,505,000
October	36,818,000
November	36,475,000
December	36,119,000

The odd thing about this is that employment declined all through the summer, when Mr. Hoover declared the depression had ended. It did not improve until September and October, when it was settled in every mind

that he was defeated. At that time the odds were two and three to one against his election in November. No one believed he had a chance.

Of course, I do not believe this little improvement was due to the prospect of his defeat. It had nothing to do with that. It was a mere seasonal fluctuation, like all the other minor interruptions in the downward movement of our economy.

The climax of the book is the thesis that Mr. Hoover was in no way responsible for the great bank crash of 1933; but that this was the fault of Mr. Roosevelt and the Democrats.

The authors insist that the banking troubles had been checked. There were no serious runs on banks between July and September, 1932. This, of course, is a cold-blooded falsification of a fact of recent history very easily inspected. The failures from July to December ranged from sixteen to fifty-one a week.

The authors' theory is that before July, 1932, there had been many failures before the RFC got to functioning effectively in its salvaging work. After July 1, there were few. The facts are that there were 1,456 failures in the whole year 1932 and that 657 of them occurred after July 1. Moreover, the banks which were closing were banks which had already weathered three full years of depression and which were presumably stronger than the earlier failures.

They insist that bank deposits were increased after July. Of course bank deposits were increased, since the United States government began putting money into the banks through the RFC.

Credit, we are told, was resumed. That is another cold-blooded invention. Between June and December, bank credit declined by $1,771,000,000, as shown by the record of bank loans in the Federal Reserve Bulletin for July, 1933.

After the election and the long train of depressive forces gathered cumulative strength, as the banks began failing in greater numbers, and as Mr. Roosevelt prepared to take office, Mr. Hoover wrote him asking for a conference and suggesting that the two collaborate to prevent things from going to pieces. As is now well known, Mr. Roosevelt refused to collaborate with Mr. Hoover. I do not, of course, hold any brief for Mr. Roose-

velt. I believe his course as president has been one long series of tragic mistakes. He has persisted in Mr. Hoover's amazing folly of attempting to support and save the crumbling credit structure of bankrupt banks, bankrupt railroads, and bankrupt farmers. And he has done nothing more than Mr. Hoover in a fundamental way about bank reform. But as one reads the record of those troubled days as disclosed in the Newton-Myers book, one can hardly quarrel with Mr. Roosevelt for refusing to act with the retiring president.

Mr. Hoover's crowning weakness as president was his tragic ineptness. As the clouds gathered in darker masses over the country, he grew more morose, even surly. I recall his impossible relations with the newspaper men about this time. His letter to Mr. Roosevelt was a sort of crowning affront. Mr. Hoover had just been defeated by one of the most humiliating majorities in our political history. He had been repudiated by the people. Yet he was writing to the man who had defeated him in a tone of professorial assurance, calling upon him to confer with him for the purpose of carrying out a plan which Mr. Hoover had worked out for Mr. Roosevelt and which Mr. Roosevelt had been elected not to do.

It would be manifestly unfair to blame Mr. Hoover for the depression. He had nothing to do with it. He had little or nothing to do with the ups and downs of that depression as it moved through its downward course all through his term. The depression was the natural result of the defects inherent in the capitalist system, which, perhaps, may be corrected so as to make that system function with greater smoothness, though of course never with completeness and permanent prosperity; which defects, however, will probably never be corrected because the capitalist leaders of America do not understand them and do not want them corrected. But this volume is written to prove that Mr. Hoover met and conquered a depression which began with 2,500,000 out of work and ended in his term with 15,700,000 out of work. This is the army of unemployed he handed over to his successor. But that vast army owed its size, not to anything Mr. Hoover had done, but to the wickedness, the ineptness, the madness of his opponents and, above all, to the man who succeeded him in the White House. No more audacious torturing of history has ever been attempted.

A TRADITIONIST LOOKS AT LIBERALISM

Allen Tate

MODERN CONTROVERSIALISTS appeal, at some stage in the discussion, to two related questions that are, in a pragmatic age, two ways of seeing the same problem. A critic asks his opponent: Is your program practicable? If the critic decides that the program will work, he does not ask the second question, but he is certain to ask it if he thinks that the scheme of his opponent has no chance of "success": What in the first place is the basis of your belief in this program?

The two questions are necessarily the same in the moral climate of relativism in which we live. I have no objection to the identification. It is only necessary that we should know what we are talking about. The validity of my belief in my ability to walk across the street depends strictly upon the pragmatic test. But that is not the kind of belief that we are leaning upon when we say: Chastity is a good; politics is philosophically above economics; man partakes of the divine nature. By the pragmatic test it can be shown that the negatives of these beliefs can be made in some sense to "work."

But that does not disqualify them. From the moral point of view the value of the "working" is the degree to which it realizes the belief: the standard invoked here attributes greater reality to the objective than to the process. To the pragmatist there is only process. Let us glance at an example of "objective" wherein the "process" is wholly absorbed into its terms. Mr. Jones announces: "I have achieved a spiritual regeneration."

He has isolated an experience in terms of a belief, which thus gains a sensible, concrete body. The experience exists in terms of the belief.

Take Mr. Jones' regeneration another way. Let a psychologist look at him and say: "Mr. Jones has achieved a better adjustment to his environment." The psychologist has isolated the experience (which he calls the behavior) of Mr. Jones in an entirely new set of terms that omit the belief that poor Jones thought he was acting upon. The psychologist substitutes for Jones' "rationalization" an inference built up upon an experimental observation of his behavior. What Jones did, not what he thought he was doing, was his real belief. Jones' own procedure has been completely reversed by the psychologist. His belief has been absorbed by his behavior —his objective absorbed by a process.

II

Now the next step of the pragmatic critic: there is, he says, no argument here—you believe one thing, I another. Even if I wanted to believe in your program, the assumptions of my thought would not let me. Based upon your assumptions are many beliefs that I find interesting and even desirable, but I cannot go all the way with you because not only will the ground of my beliefs hinder me; the very fact that nine men out of ten today share my view makes your program extremely doubtful of success. We are committed to a view in which your beliefs have little or no efficacy; we are committed to a program of our own that, in spite of its defects, has captured the modern world. For good or ill we must make the best of it.

This state of mind is Liberalism. It is the attitude of Mr. Dudley Wynn, whose essay in the January, 1936, number of *The Virginia Quarterly Review* will reward the reader's closest attention. Mr. Wynn makes out—accidentally, I take it—a powerful case for tradition as he understands it. He finds "tradition" attractive, but he cannot believe in it. He can believe in Liberalism. He says:

> If one accepts the views of the Agrarians, one accepts them; if one cannot accept those views, one can only try to show the points at which belief balks. It is not a question of what one feels one needs to believe, but simply of what one can believe.

Liberals, from William James to Walter Lippman and Mr. Wynn, constantly stress the *can*—the possibility of certain beliefs. I agree with them that there are legitimate and illegitimate objects of belief, but evidently Mr. Wynn and other Liberals have made up their minds to swallow everything or to starve to death: we must believe everything or nothing. The dilemma is historically the most naïve feature of the whole Rationalistic movement. Rationalism thinks that it does not *believe*; it rigorously *proves*. It is probable that if the Liberals were a little more genuinely sceptical, they would not be so sure of their emancipation from beliefs, and would thus be able to discipline the beliefs that they entertain in the kitchen.

But Mr. Wynn is not an enthusiastic Liberal; he is rather a disappointed traditionist. He is for tradition, and I think it is fair to say that he is against Liberalism. Yet he is vehemently against traditionists, and in favor of Liberals. That is to say, he sympathizes with the necessary unbelief of the modern Liberal. Tradition is good, but persons who believe in it must be deluding themselves, and he is against them.

Let us see definitely what he is against, for what Mr. Wynn opposes is what a great many tepid allies of tradition balk at—because they can believe only in what is possible to believe. For example: the Liberal will not accept the Agrarian economics because it involves belief in religious authority. It is impossible today to believe in religious authority. The syllogism concealed here is unexceptionable, but its logic was used on another occasion to make the Mad Hatter's tea party one of the memorable scenes in literature. For Mr. Wynn deduces the Agrarian belief in religious authority in the following manner:

First, Tate wrote an essay called "Religion and the Old South," in which he pointed out two things—that the "progressivist" view of history is the relativist view in which the religious absolute disintegrates, and that this wicked view rose upon the débris of medieval Catholicism, which stood for religious authority; therefore since Tate is an Agrarian, an anti-modernist who deplores the relativist view, he must necessarily believe in religious authority. And if the other Agrarians were only intelligent enough, they would see the implications of their position, and believe in it too.

Secondly, the English Distributists believe in the value of agriculture and small ownership; the Agrarians believe in agriculture and small ownership. The English Distributists believe in monarchy and Catholicism; *therefore,* the Agrarians believe in monarchy and Catholicism.

I do not wish to be discourteous to a new and brilliant critic; but if this kind of logic is possible, then anything is possible; and I am at a loss to understand why Mr. Wynn cannot believe in so simple a thing as religious authority.

I do not believe in it, and it is my distinct impression that none of the writers called Agrarians has written a single sentence setting forth belief in it. *Neither the Agrarian economics nor religious authority is a legitimate object of belief, nor can it be.*

When Liberals say that belief in religious authority is impossible today, I reply that it is not only impossible today, it has always been impossible. No one has ever *believed* in it. I don't want to labor the point: it is perhaps sufficient for the purpose to indicate that the Immaculate Conception, since it cannot be proved but only inferred to be either true or false, is a legitimate object of belief. Religious authority is not an object of belief; it is a matter of historical fact; it is the name for the exercise of a kind of authority that once existed in fact. Whether it shall exist again is speculative.

"It is not a question," says the Liberal, "of what one feels one needs to believe"—precisely. If I felt that I needed to believe in religious authority, I should commit suicide, for I should then be at liberty to feel that I needed to believe in thunder, roses, and pop corn. The Liberal mind—even when it leans towards tradition—has not been famous for its philosophical tact. The best it has been able to exhibit in that field is the late William James.

III

The problem of belief is not new. It harrassed the Greeks, and the early Church Fathers were perfectly familiar with its modern implications. (It was not, then, invented by Mr. I. A. Richards.) The logical sophistication of Tertullian's *Credo quia absurdum* is a starting point for the modern dissociation of ideas. The Liberal sees the one idea as multiple, as a "series of progressively developing problems." But the Liberal,

examining tradition, sets up an idea of his own and "dissociates" it as if it were somebody else's. Among these traditionist straw men is a monster who has been able to solve everything, because to him problems do not exist. The traditionist, for example, thinks that understanding is the equivalent of belief. If it were possible to believe in religious authority and I wanted to believe in it, all I should have to do would be to understand it historically. (Grant to the Traditionist a historical understanding of Catholicism: that is a good enough pretext for the Liberal to tell the plain citizen that the Agrarians want to put popery over on him along with property.) Now this argument about the credulity of the traditionist is this: the traditionist has understood the mentality of the thirteenth century; he thinks that the world view of that century had features of great value, of value more contributive to the dignity and total welfare of men than the qualities of life available under the world view of the twentieth century; therefore the traditionist believes everything that the thirteenth century believed.

There are doubtless traditionists who think they believe all this, and others who genuinely do believe it. If the acceptance of all the beliefs of another age is a prerequisite of traditionalism, I cannot qualify for it. I share with the thirteenth century, or the eighteenth, or the twentieth, its objects of belief neither through the descent of unbroken generations nor by independent act of faith. I will be explicit, and instance the particular situation. I am two generations removed from Catholicism on the maternal side of my family; on the paternal, I am removed at least thirteen generations. But that does not, in my opinion, prove anything about my eligibility to tradition.

Now a genuine religion commands us to consider absolutes. A man living in the stream of religious tradition has the absolutes available to him; indeed, he cannot evade them. But there are always the heretics on the one hand and, on the other, the apostates who combat the absolutes. The absolutes of religion, therefore, are not imperatives of belief; they are rather imperatives of reference. Even in the science of psychology the Christian soul is still an imperative of reference, for the disintegrated, multiple "psyche" of modern man is intelligible only by reference to the historic unity of soul. The dominating structure of a great civilized tradition

is certain absolutes—points of moral and intellectual reference by which people live, and by which they must continue to live until in the slow crawl of history new references take their place. The "references" are never wholly new; medieval Europe itself was a palimpsest, the thirteenth century in France being conspicuously a focus of disparate elements. But it was a genuine, living center. Life had suddenly achieved a new unity. Men had won a great moral advantage of raw nature in achieving a coherent way of thinking about their experience. They called the general scheme of that experience *Christianity*, a unified conception of man in relation to God and nature—and the conception was upheld by belief.

We now lack the unity of life. One defect of the Liberal criticism of modern traditionalism is its assumption that traditionists think they "catch" the unity by exposure to evidence of its past existence. The "unity" that Liberals accuse the traditionist of having trifled with is a unity of their own fiction. In the bright light of this perfect, fictitious unity the traditionist looks very silly. Now the Southern traditionist is in part a Jeffersonian in so far as he must notice that phase of abstract tradition which is American. Yet, argues the Liberal, how can tradition be Jeffersonian when Jefferson himself was a brilliant star of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, a naturalistic revolution that affected disastrously the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas—who is, if anybody is, the very apex of our "tradition"?

The Liberals stretch or trim the traditionist to a fictitious bed, and stand back and say: Isn't it amazing how uncomfortable he is? Then they deliver a lecture: You may deny that you don't believe in this fictitious unity, but if you believe that naturalism, progressivism, modernism are false doctrines, then you must *by implication* believe . . . But that is Mad Hatter's logic again, in which everything implies in an infinite sorites everything else.

IV

The modern traditionist's reconstruction of history, like the Liberal's, is based upon the naturalistic principle. No living man can exist outside his mental climate. The strictly historical foundations of belief in tradition are the same as the foundations of Liberalism. The "historical method" of recovering the past the traditionist employs, and must employ,

no less than the Liberal. And it is a method of viewing our past experience that is deeply involved in the whole naturalistic movement.

But a distinctive feature of the historical method is that it is negative, or it is at its best neutral. While the view of history as cause and effect, a view that includes the "conditioning" theories of race and climate, has enormously stimulated the scholars' curiosity about the past, the information thus yielded may be arranged in any pattern of belief whatsoever. I may look at English history with John Richard Green as the gradual development of the art of self-government, and I may look at Green as an apologist of nineteenth-century Whiggery and as a father of the Liberals. I may look at English history with Hilaire Belloc—as I happen to do with reservations—as the decline of moral standards and human liberty from the twelfth century to our day. Or I may see English history as a bubble in a large cultural process known as *Western Civilization,* and trace out, with Spengler, the "physiognomic" identities of the process with other processes like Chinese culture or the Magian. For the distinctive feature of the historical method is its technique of studying the past, with historical generalization theoretically ruled out; but because the naturalistic mind thinks and orders according to certain "laws," the laws are read into the past, and thus historical generalization actually functions at high speed. Some kind of pattern or historical picture is necessarily there as a pattern. It is only more or less articulate in different historians.

What the historical method rules out then is not a logic of history, but rather theories of ultimate value; it actually insists in the long run that the historical picture shall be strictly relative, not that there shall be no picture. So the conflict between Liberal and traditionist centers first in the meaning of the historical method itself. The Liberal may be friendly to tradition while he cannot believe in it. The traditionist has found in the past a certain unity of life which he would preserve or create again. The traditionist believes in that unity, on its purely empirical side, on the same authority to which the Liberal appeals in disbelieving in it. Both appeal to the findings of history. Both, equipped with the historical method, construct a relativist pattern of reference. But the Liberal, as a relativist, rules out the validity of absolutes even in those ages that thought they were living by them. The traditionist, who is also a modernist and inevit-

ably a relativist in procedure, and, as I think, a more thorough sceptic than the Liberal, includes in his historical picture absolute beliefs as being implicit and emergent in experience at all times, and under certain conditions, explicit and realized. And here it is the traditionist's historical sense that tells him that this must be so: men in other times have lived by absolutes, and although he himself does not live by absolutes now, he is convinced, partly on the evidence of the historical method that he shares with the Liberal, that man needs absolute beliefs in order completely to realize his nature.

What Liberal historian, who understands the profoundly relative ground of his procedure, can logically contest this even more extreme extension of his own inherent scepticism? For under relativism the very structure of history is relative—which means that so long as the system is not closed it may embrace anything. It has as a matter of fact embraced everything—but absolutes. For the meaning of relativism in history allows us to believe anything that we want to believe—as the late Sir J. G. Frazer believed that every time an animal appeared in primitive societies it meant totemism.

V

Opponents of tradition accuse the traditionist of using a capital T—of making a quality an abstraction, and hence an absolute. This is the assumption of the Liberals. It is a curious kind of absolute for the Liberals to construct, and in most of them it is doubtless only a debater's absolute that puts the traditionist in the wrong. The traditionist has never had tradition lying about him in lumps, nor hanging luxuriantly from the trees. It is a quality of judgment and of conduct rooted in a concrete way of life that demands constant rediscovery; and it must be maintained with the hardest vigilance.

The question: What is tradition? is unanswerable. It is not a *thing*. The proper question is: What qualities of our experience at a given time are worth preserving? For tradition is quite simply that quality of life that we have got from our immediate past, or if we are makers of tradition, the quality that we create and try to pass on to the next generation. If we are already traditional persons, we shall pass on something that we did not make, but in the act of transmitting it we submit it to the hazard of

change and expect it to be altered and renewed by the moral problems of the future. It has been the privilege of every generation to decide for or against tradition—to decide whether it shall continue to live within a fundamental unity of morals that it received from the immediate past.

Today no American community can transmit a tradition whole. If the future shall have one, we have got to make it. For with respect to tradition only three kinds of society are possible. There is the anti-traditional society—or call it, if you will, culture—which destroys the tradition and produces the un-traditional society that we have today. The anti-traditional society or culture agitated for its ends from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to the Great War, when it triumphed, and passed into the un-traditional state in which the choice, for the ordinary man, between tradition and disorder ceased to exist. The un-traditional society then is one in which the moral unity of man is no longer an issue. Having rejected a social and economic structure that makes possible free decision in the moral sense, we live in a system of money references that the moral will cannot control: for the institution of controlled property we have substituted finance-capitalism, which is the creation of nineteenth-century foreign trade and industrialism.

The traditional society is based upon property, and property means not only ownership but control; not only economic privilege but moral obligation; not only rights but duties; not only material welfare but moral standards. And property means all this because the joint fact of ownership-control resides in the human character and is commensurate with human character. Finance-capitalism is ownership apart from human character because it is ownership apart from control; moral agency becomes, under the new system, economic purpose, and we get, in place of Christian or moral man, Economic Man, a living abstraction who is necessarily abstract, being the mere expression of another abstraction—Economic Productiveness. The Economic Man is controlled by his system of production; the man of property controls his system of production. The Economic Man wields the science of the mastery of nature; man in the culture of property adds to the science of nature his mastery of the science, the excess of attention and love that is art, which is the symbol of man's mastery of himself.

A society based upon property will pass on its heritage in a concrete form, and this concrete form, property, which means moral control of the means of life, is the medium in which tradition is passed on. The traditional society will envisage its heritage in moral terms because its members must be personally responsible for the material basis of life. A society personally responsible for the material basis of life is a traditional society. Such a society is any community of men who pass to the next generation, under a definite conception of human nature, a code of conduct; and this code of conduct, apart from its function, is a symbol of the excess of attention and love which is art and religion—a proof that men have mastered not only a productive process but themselves as well. They are able to act humanly and not merely economically, towards the material basis of life and towards one another.

In our own un-traditional society there is a vast hiatus between the successful operation of the "means of production" and a coherent moral standard. Individuals here and there maintain standards. But there is no code of conduct, no mature articulation of the code in religion, that is commensurate with the economic process. A traditional society not only makes possible, but actually enjoins, the affirmation of a high code that permeates every implication of public and private experience. The economic process thus looked upon as a medium is, precisely as paint and canvas are to the artist, the medium of the moral conduct of man.

A society dominated by its economics is bound to be composed chiefly of men, whether workers or capitalists, to whom "making a living" and a "way of life" are quite different pursuits. Both workers and capitalists are operating the means of production without controlling it. The capitalist class seeks a realm of moral choice apart from its livelihood—and we get American culture today, a meaningless collection of other peoples' arts and morals, meaningless because irrelevant to the material basis of life. But the traditional community is made up of men who are never quite making their living and who never quite cease to make it: they are making their living all the time and affirming their code all the time. In societies dominated by the moral and religious view, the life of men and their livelihood approximate a unity in which to speak of the one is to speak of the other.

These qualities seem to me to be the essentials of "tradition." And we are wasting our time if we suppose that St. Thomas, religious authority, the Catholic Church, the Old South, were ever more than expressions of certain degrees of achievement in traditional life by certain men at certain times under certain conditions. It is a special "psychosis" of modern man that impels him to "restore the past." Those ages of the past that he cries for had restored nothing whatever: they created something, and although they levied upon the past, they quickly transformed their borrowings, and amalgamated past and present into a whole.

VI

The problem of belief involved in the traditional view is peculiarly difficult because an irrelevance clouds it. The real problem is not religious authority or our ability to restore the Old South, nor yet whether Jefferson as a Rationalist was not hostile to tradition. We have got first of all to answer a question. What ground is there for belief in the value of the moral unity of man—the unity of moral choice and material occupation? The answer is: Every ground. That is an absolute upon which all men are united, the relativist historian no less than the Dominican priest—the historian joining in an affirmation that his occupation on principle denies.

The belief that moral unity is desirable is not a belief that it is automatically possible: that is the irrelevance set up by the anti-traditionist to befog the issue. I think it is worth repeating that the future realization of a traditional society of morally unified persons is not an object of belief; it is or it is not a potentiality of fact that no one can predict. But the belief in moral unity as the highest good that men can seek to achieve waits upon no question of fact. It is a pure belief inherent in our experience, not only in individual experience but in the experience of our civilization as we recover it from history. If we see it only as a historical generalization, there is even in that field as much ground for belief in it as there is for its antithesis—in which no man, living or dead, has ever believed.

Examine the antithesis: *Moral disunity is desirable.* It violates a fundamental assumption of all men as profoundly as an undistributed middle destroys an Aristotelian syllogism.

Since the value of moral unity is a kind of *a priori* truth, the anti-traditionist, attempting to undermine his opponent's position, must question, not this truth, but the kind of medium that the traditionist sets up for its realization. For whether the unity itself is desirable or undesirable is an absolute imperative of reference to which we must submit all our experience.

At a particular stage of traditional life in Europe one expression of its moral unity was the worship of the Virgin at Chartres—just as the unity was an expression of that worship. When a peasant plowed a field he did not cease to worship the Virgin, nor at the altar did he cease to be a plowman. The plowman, of course, living unreflectingly in the medieval scheme, made no distinction between imperative of reference and imperative of belief; yet had he rejected belief he could not have escaped the dilemma, unity or disunity, as an imperative of reference.

Nor can the modern Liberal escape that reference. When the Liberal says that he believes in "progressivism" because it has triumphed, he is saying that he cannot believe in unity because we have disunity. He cannot believe in truth because we are dominated by falsehood. He is affirming his loyalty to a program in which he not only *does* not believe, but cannot, on the grounds that he offers, believe; nor can any one else believe in progressivism on the mere ground of its "success." When the Liberal backs off from tradition because he cannot believe in it, because "it is not a question of what one feels one needs to believe, but simply of what one can believe," he is confusing with belief the potentiality of fact. He is saying that in order to believe in the value of traditional life—the life of moral unity that can be handed on—we have got first to know that it will be handed on. The validity of the traditional program, for the Liberal pragmatist, is the sheer accident of its future success.

Now this brings us, I think, back to the first section of this essay—to the modern psychologist's discovery that the "behavioristic reference" of belief *is* the belief. Belief is not our way of thinking about what we do, for that is rationalization; it is what we *do* that defines what we "really" believe. A young man is writing a poem. He is not really writing a poem; he is trying to justify himself in a difficult social maladjustment in which the ordinary forms of social justification have been unsuccessfully tried or

are too difficult. There is no quarrel with this view—so long as it is applied strictly to the modern mind suffering from disunity and about which the theory is descriptively true.

The psychological technique not only implies its appropriate theory of disunity; it has risen upon the modern experience of disunity. There is no space here to go into the implications of this theory. It becomes profoundly unhistorical when it argues, as it often does argue, that the medieval plowman was rationalizing his labor with worship of the Virgin at Chartres: the historian reads into the past his own moral disunity. He is saying that the material medium of life must forever resist moral control, that the medieval plowman's labor was identical with the machine-tending of the modern factory worker, who has no moral control over the means of livelihood because he lacks all moral connection with it. The historian, in effect, tells us that the moral unification of human purpose and material medium has never been achieved, cannot be achieved, and so never will be achieved; and that it is a delusion.

And he is right—if we allow him to deal, as he usually does, irresponsibly with his fictitious absolutes. For the perfect traditional society has never existed, can never exist, and is a delusion. But the perfect traditional society as an imperative of reference—not as an absolute lump to be measured and weighed—has always existed, and will continue to haunt the moral imagination of men. Whether the modern mechanical society can be brought to a state of mechanical perfection yet remains to be seen; but as a merely logical absolute it can be envisaged by the scientific mind. The traditional society cannot be envisaged as a mechanical, scientific absolute, and that is why the modern Liberal historian, erecting it into the fictitious absolute that we have seen, can easily discredit it. The traditional procedure is in the long run less vaultingly ambitious. It aims at no mechanical perfection, no natural absolute; it does not attempt to abstract the material process from the moral whole of life. The traditionist attempts only what the sculptor attempts to do with his stone—to bring his experience to form and order.

In modern societies, which are rapidly moving through finance-capitalism toward collectivism—the archetype of the un-traditional life—the means of livelihood are more and more divorced from the moral agency

of men. Maxim Gorky has recently said: "We have liberated men from the burden of property." In Western societies we too are separating the moral nature of man from the primary fact of his existence—his livelihood. Our ideas about ourselves become rationalizations, and are chaotic and irresponsible. For, under an absolute imperative of reference, we must construct a moral picture of ourselves; it is a fate that we cannot deny. Our moral picture will be good or bad, but it cannot cease to be. Our modern moral pictures have no organic relation to what we are doing; our moral life has lost its hold upon our material life. In the effort to understand our conduct we commit ourselves to rationalizations—pictures of conduct irrelevant to what we actually do.

The modern psychological technique is profoundly relevant to our experience: our beliefs about ourselves are profoundly irrelevant to our experience. So the Liberal may well stand appalled at the futility of our modern beliefs. But then we may ask: How can he continue to think that he believes in them? He will answer: "On the ground of their success"—whatever kind of belief success may be.

THE OPEN DOOR POLICY AND PEACE IN THE PACIFIC

Harold S. Quigley

In the current discussion of ways and means of keeping this country at peace with the world the Open Door Policy with respect to China is being reëxamined for evidences that it may become a cause of war with Japan. It is highly important that the true nature and the implications of the policy should be understood by the American people. Is it merely an attractive way of phrasing our traditional doctrine of trading on equal terms with all nations, or is it also a policy of imperialism loaded with political dynamite?

The unconditional most-favored-nation clause, generally found in commercial treaties, assures to the contracting parties whatever favors and concessions are granted by either of them to a third state. The Open Door Policy does that. But it does more than that. It amounts to an understanding, which in 1922 became a legal agreement, that states trading with and investing in China will refrain from obstructing the operation of the most-favored-nation clause. We do not find similar agreements for other countries or regions, either because the countries affected were strong enough to sustain their commercial policies alone, or because some one nation or group of nations had obtained a preferred or monopolistic position. Thus, the issue of maintaining or discarding the Open Door Policy is not merely an economic but a political issue. It involves the question whether or not China shall be left alone to maintain her commercial independence.

That this is true will be recognized if we recall the circumstances in which the policy was formulated. In 1895 was inaugurated the process of

forcing China to concede "spheres of interest" in which, by construction of the sphere-holding state, a preference was assumed to be granted to the merchants and investors of that state. Between that date and the end of the century, France had obtained agreements which might be interpreted, as were by her interpreted, as establishing a priority for her interests in developing mines, building railways, and furnishing railway materials in the provinces of Kwantung, Kwangsi, and Yunan. England had asserted that she was opposed to spheres but that she was forced to adopt what others were doing, and had obtained a non-alienation declaration respecting the Yangtsze valley, which she interpreted as the definition of a sphere of prior interest. Russia had a dominant position in Manchuria, Germany in Shantung. In addition to the spheres, each of these powers had obtained territorial leases for longer or shorter periods, leases which were by many legal authorities termed disguised cessions. The partition of China was being freely predicted.

Into this situation Secretary Hay, with British encouragement, projected the Open Door Policy. It expressed the apprehension of the United States that its merchants would be shut out of the Chinese market, and the determination of the government that this should not happen. From that date (1899) until it was incorporated definitively in the Nine Power Treaty of Washington (1922), and subsequently until today, the American government has viewed the Open Door into China as a cardinal object of its foreign policy. By the Nine Power Treaty a step further was attempted in that the signatories renounced the policy of creating additional spheres of interest. By that date Germany had lost her sphere to Japan, and Great Britain had established her control over Tibet. Soviet Russia had been compelled to share Manchuria with Japan but had recouped herself in Outer Mongolia. Since the Washington Conference, Russia has given up the remainder of her Manchurian sphere to Japan but has increased her influence in Outer Mongolia. Japan maintains a sphere-holding policy in Shantung and Fukien. British influence remains strong in the Yangtsze Valley and Tibet, though weakened by Japanese military activities in central China. France has strengthened her position in the three most southerly Chinese provinces.

In the course of the Boxer uprising Secretary Hay supplemented

the Open Door notes with the announcement that his government desired to preserve the territorial integrity and administrative entity of China. This expression later was altered to "territorial and administrative integrity." Although the other powers were not asked to subscribe to this statement, it has been viewed generally in this country and by other states as a necessary corollary of the Open Door Policy, and it was incorporated as such in the Nine Power Treaty above mentioned. Its relation to the Open Door Policy was well stated by Secretary Hughes at the Washington Conference: "These principles have been called co-ordinate, but they are, in effect, different aspects of the same principle. For any impairment of the sovereignty of China must affect the rights and interests of other powers in relation to China; and any attempt to establish a particularistic and exclusive system in favor of any foreign nation thereby creates conditions prejudicial to China's freedom in relation to other powers. The distinction therefore seems to be one of relative emphasis rather than of kind."

Apparently Secretary Hay did not take this view of the interdependence of the two principles. He wrote to President Roosevelt on May 1, 1902, after strongly protesting Russia's demands for exclusive commercial and investment privileges in Manchuria: "We [i. e., the American government] are not in any attitude of hostility towards Russia in Manchuria. On the contrary, we recognize her exceptional position in northern China. What we have been working for two years to accomplish, if assurances are to count for anything, is that no matter what happens eventually in northern China and Manchuria, the United States shall not be placed in any worse position than while the country was under the unquestioned dominion of China." Unquestionably the subsequent development of American thought was in the direction of the interpretation set forth by Secretary Hughes. Hay could hardly have envisaged the policy as applicable if Manchuria were annexed to Russia. In such a case Russian policy, not Chinese policy, would apply, and understandings among the powers respecting their relations with China would be irrelevant.

That the Open Door Policy has been, in part, a policy of imperialism on the part of the United States is demonstrated by the means that have

been employed to make it effective. As against China these include the system of extra-territorial jurisdiction, with all the incidental restrictions involved upon China's right of taxation, of control over foreign nationals, and of the regulation of foreign business; also the treaties limiting Chinese customs tariffs to very low rates, participation in the government of the International Settlement at Shanghai, and the stationing of troops there and at Peking and Tientsin. American naval craft have patrolled the coasts and rivers of China, and have at times used their guns and personnel to protect American lives and property. American forces participated in the military expedition to relieve the legations during the Boxer Rebellion. All but the second of these forms of pressure are still in use.

As against other powers the United States has not resorted to force in relation to interests in China. The American government did not oppose the acquisition, by various powers, of spheres of influence and leases of territory in China, nor the annexation by them of China's vassal states, islands, and even integral portions of her mainland territory. It did not protest the hypothecation of her customs, salt, and other revenues, as security for foreign loans. America's part in the settlement that followed the Russo-Japanese War was, to say the least, not injurious to Japan.

American efforts were exerted in favor of international financing of Manchurian railways in 1908 without success. They were directed against Japanese acquisition of control over the Chinese Eastern Railway from 1917 to 1922, and against Japanese retention of German interests in Shantung after the Great War. After recognizing in the Lansing-Ishii agreement of 1917 the special interests of Japan and China, particularly in areas contiguous to Japanese possessions, but without prejudice to China's sovereignty or the commercial rights of other states, the United States asked and obtained the termination of the agreement in order to obviate possibilities of misinterpretations. Civil strife in China having opened the way to unsecured loans made by Japanese interests to corrupt political cliques in return for concessions, Secretary Lansing led in organizing the second financial consortium to prevent further traffic in China's misfortunes. At the Washington Conference Secretary Hughes collaborated with other governments in the general limitation of naval power, and in a broad definition of the Open Door Policy. The

American part in terminating the Anglo-Japanese alliance was resented by Japan. In 1928 Secretary Kellogg forestalled all other powers in recognizing the new National Government of China. Secretary Stimson's doctrine of nonrecognition of Manchukuo, announced in 1932, has not been discarded by the present administration.

From this brief glance at the record we may draw certain conclusions: (1) that the policy of the United States prior to Japan's "arrival" as a great power in 1905, was beneficial to Japan in that it sought to preserve freedom of trade for all states with China and was opposed to the partition of China among European powers; (2) that since 1905 it has worked against Japan. To the Japanese policy of control in China it has opposed a program of political reorganization along democratic lines. Japan has been motivated by the fear of Occidental financial power, the United States by a desire to protect a potentially great field of trade and investment. Popular sentiment in this country also has been intrigued with the idea of assisting "Young China" to democratize its people.

The Open Door Policy in American practice has been a compound of imperialism and humanitarianism. It has aimed consistently at the preservation and strengthening of China. But it has done so out of mixed motives, the most prominent of which inevitably has been the desire for commercial and financial profits. The methods used, though short of war, have been those of "power politics." A formidable argument could be made for the proposition that the benefits of our policy to China outweigh the disadvantages. It could be shown also that the several contentions of Japan in justification of her program of dominance are either legally invalid or politically unfounded. But with Japan in her present mood, such an effort would be futile except to justify ourselves in our own eyes, should we decide to go the limit in defense of our policy. The controlling voices in Japan believe that their program is essential to Japan's security, they are genuinely fearful of Western influence in China, and they are convinced that Japan has a civilizing mission there. Their attitude reduces the American problem to one of deciding whether, in the face of Japan's resort to force, the United States will pursue its policy with the same weapon.

In the presence of happenings since September, 1931, it may well be asked whether the Open Door Policy is still in effect. Manchuria and Jehol have been detached from China by force. In Manchukuo monopolies have been created in favor of Japanese interests. The northern provinces of China proper are still officered by Chinese, but by Chinese who are amenable to Japan, the former officials having been forced out by Japanese threats. A second state, formed out of those provinces, is about to be carved out with Japanese swords. Japan has, by indirect means, let it be understood that there must be no international loans to China and no foreign loans whatever without her permission; also that she is opposed to the purchase by China of foreign airplanes or war material. Tremendous pressure has been exerted for several years to bring China into an economic combination or bloc with Japan and Manchukuo. Yet the Japanese foreign office continues to assert its support of the Open Door Policy.

The League of Nations and the United States have protested against certain of these acts and expressions and have refused to recognize Manchukuo. The refusal of recognition has not led the non-recognizing countries to discontinue trading with Manchukuo nor to withdraw their consuls. As for China herself, she has felt forced to submit to every serious Japanese threat. Her government is seeking means compatible with her own preservation toward fuller coöperation with Japan, and a distinguished group of her business leaders recently visited Tokyo with that in view. These moves are not pro-Japanese; they are the strategy of a weaker economy seeking to preserve itself.

Recent British and American commercial missions to the Far East reveal a continued interest in the Open Door. The report of the American mission of 1935, headed by W. Cameron Forbes, was favorable not only to renewed efforts to stimulate trade with China but also to investment there. There have been newspaper reports that the British government was in favor of a large loan secured upon Chinese railway revenues. American airplane companies are urging support of their very profitable business with the Chinese government and their project of transpacific air service. The American government protested to Japan against the oil monopoly in Manchukuo. Great Britain, France, and the United States declined to accept the implications of the Amau statement of April, 1934, in which

Japan's pretensions to control over Chinese trade and investment were bluntly outlined. Both the British and the American governments have loaned money to the Chinese government within the last two years. Both protested, in somewhat veiled terms, against outside maneuvering in North China, and both, to date, have declined to admit the propriety of naval equality between themselves and Japan.

What emerges from these facts is that the Open Door Policy remains officially in being and that certain powers are making an effort to implement it as far as may be without colliding with Japan. But, in fact, the territorial and administrative integrity of China has been impaired and appears likely to be further impaired; also the Open Door in the sense of equal opportunity is in process of closing. So long, however, as the great powers who originated the policy continue even to assert it, the possibility of collision will remain.

Three alternative courses are available: we may attempt to maintain the Open Door by force, we may renounce the Policy, or we may continue as at present. To adopt the first, whether acting alone or with Great Britain, would involve us in immense losses of life and wealth. British fears of war in Europe would prevent full coöperation, and would leave this country to carry the heavier responsibility. In the end we would win, but to what good? We should be financially exhausted and unable to extend to China the help her reorganization would require. Japan would be further embittered and eager for revenge.

To renounce a policy so solidly established would be extremely difficult. In the first place, to do so would be illegal unless the assent of the thirteen states which ratified or acceded to the Nine Power Treaty were first obtained. In that case renunciation would be worth while if thereby we could obtain the promise of Japan, backed by an international guarantee, to discontinue efforts to destroy the Chinese state. No price, short of war, would be too great to pay for that, since trade and investment opportunities would be available, no matter how closely China were tied to Japan economically. Assuming that bargain to be impossible, we cannot renounce the Policy without loss of prestige in China, not to speak of economic losses which would be very considerable at present and much greater in the future.

It therefore seems desirable to continue with our present middle-of-the-road procedure, though it is one of great danger and no little embarrassment. It preserves the peace without withdrawing from China the moral support of a friendly people. But a program of protest and non-recognition may degenerate into one of recrimination and war unless preventive measures are taken. These must be devised with full realization that the fundamental issue is not the Open Door or the integrity of China, but the future political development of China. This country probably must surrender any pride of leadership there, not to Japan but to the Chinese themselves. Asiatic development toward democracy should take its own course which may mean following that of Japan. Rights now enjoyed which implement Occidental influence upon that development will have to be given up, chief among them, extra-territoriality. Since financial control through large loans is an instrument of political leadership, that also must be surrendered. The foreign settlements must be turned back to China. In short, the West must evacuate.

This program has the merit of being attractive to both China and Japan. It should reassure Japan while immensely contributing to Chinese dignity and self-confidence. It should relieve the tension upon the Open Door Policy by reducing it from a political to an economic arrangement. It may save the substance at the price of appearance. If to this program can be added other features designed to prove to the Japanese that they are mistaken in their interpretation of Western policy (such as a revision of our immigration and naturalization laws; a general Pacific understanding upon trade, shipping, communications, etc.; and a plan of coöperation in Chinese relations that will embrace all the Pacific powers), peace may be preserved.

These measures having been proposed or taken by our government, the casting of the die for war would be up to Japan. After all, there is a limit to the concessions this country can or will make for peace, particularly if it can be supposed that they are being made through fear. Japanese statesmen should understand that American statesmen, like themselves, have a keen sense of self-respect, that they hold that often-abused, yet nevertheless real, thing, the national honor, in their hands. Peace must be paid for by all interested parties.

JERICHO, JERICHO, JERICHO

Andrew Nelson Lytle

She opened her eyes. She must have been asleep for hours or months. She could not reckon; she could only feel the steady silence of time. She had been Joshua and made it swing suspended in her room. Forever she had floated above the counterpane, between the tester and the counterpane she had floated until her hand, long and bony, its speckled-dried skin drawing away from the bulging blue veins, had reached and drawn her body under the covers. And now she was resting, clear-headed and quiet, her thoughts clicking like a new-greased mower. All creation could not make her lift her thumb or cross it over her finger. She looked at the bed, the bed her mother had died in, the bed her children had been born in, her marriage bed, the bed the General had drenched with his blood. Here it stood where it had stood for seventy years, square and firm on the floor, wide enough for three people to lie comfortable in, if they didn't sleep restless; but not wide enough for her nor long enough when her conscience scorched the cool wrinkles in the sheets. The two foot posts, octagonal-shaped and mounted by carved pieces that looked like absurd flowers, stood up to comfort her when the world began to crumble. Her eyes followed down the posts and along the basket-quilt. She had made it before her marriage to the General, only he wasn't a general then. He was a slight, tall young man with a rolling mustache and perfume in his hair. A many a time she had seen her young love's locks dripping with scented oil, down upon his collar . . . She had cut the squares for the baskets in January,

and for stuffing had used the letters of old lovers, fragments of passion cut to warm her of a winter's night. The General would have his fun. *Miss Kate, I didn't sleep well last night. I heard Sam Buchanan make love to you out of that farthest basket. If I hear him again, I mean to toss this piece of quilt in the fire.* Then he would chuckle in his round, soft voice; reach under the covers and pull her over to his side of the bed. On a cold and frosting night he would sleep with his nose against her neck. His nose was so quick to turn cold, he said, and her neck was so warm. Sometimes her hair, the loose, unruly strands at the nape, would tickle his nostrils and he would wake up with a sneeze. This had been so long ago, and there had been so many years of trouble and worry. Her eyes, as apart from her as the mirror on the bureau, rested upon the half-tester, upon the enormous button that caught the rose-colored canopy and shot its folds out like the rays of the morning sun. She could not see but she could feel the heavy cluster of mahogany grapes that tumbled from the center of the head board—out of its vines curling down the sides it tumbled. How much longer would these never-picked grapes hang above her head? How much longer would she, rather, hang to the vine of this world, she who lay beneath as dry as any raisin. Then she remembered. She looked at the blinds. They were closed.

"You, Ants, where's my stick? I'm a great mind to break it over your trifling back."

"Awake? What a nice long nap you've had," said Doctor Ed.

"The boy? Where's my grandson? Has he come?"

"I'll say he's come. What do you mean taking to your bed like this? Do you realize, beautiful lady, that this is the first time I ever saw you in bed in my whole life? I believe you've taken to bed on purpose. I don't believe you want to see me."

"Go long, boy, with your foolishness."

That's all she could say, and she blushed as she said it—she blushing at the words of a snip of a boy, whom she had diapered a hundred times and had washed as he stood before the fire in the round tin tub, his little back swayed and his little belly sticking out in front, rosy from the scrubbing he had gotten. *Mammy, what for I've got a hole in my stummick; what for, Mammy?* Now he was sitting on the edge of the bed calling her

beautiful lady, an old hag like her, beautiful lady. A good-looker the girls would call him, with his bold, careless face and his hands with their fine, long fingers. Soft, how soft they were, running over her rough, skinny bones. He looked a little like his grandpa, but somehow there was something missing . . .

"Well, boy, it took you a time to come home to see me die."

"Nonsense. Cousin Edwin, I wouldn't wait on a woman who had so little faith in my healing powers."

"There an't nothing strange about dying. But I an't in such an all-fired hurry. I've got a heap to tell you about before I go."

The boy leaned over and touched her gently. "Not even death would dispute you here, on Long Gourd, Mammy."

He was trying to put her at her ease in his carefree way. It was so obvious a pretending, but she loved him for it. There was something nice in its awkwardness, the charm of the young's blundering and of their efforts to get along in the world. Their pretty arrogance, their patronizing airs, their colossal unknowing of what was to come. It was a quenching drink to a sin-thirsty old woman. Somehow his vitality had got crossed in her blood and made a dry heart leap, her blood that was almost water. Soon now she would be all water, water and dust, lying in the burying ground between the cedar—and fire. She could smell her soul burning and see it. What a fire it would make below, dripping with sin, like a rag soaked in kerosene. But she had known what she was doing. And here was Long Gourd, all its fields intact, ready to be handed on, in better shape than when she took it over. Yes, she had known what she was doing. How long, she wondered, would his spirit hold up under the trials of planting, of cultivating, and of the gathering time, year in and year out—how would he hold up before so many springs and so many autumns. The thought of him giving orders, riding over the place, or rocking on the piazza, and a great pain would pin her heart to her backbone. She had wanted him by her to train—there was so much for him to know: how the south field was cold and must be planted late, and where the orchards would best hold their fruit, and where the frosts crept soonest—that now could never be. She turned her head—who was that woman, that strange woman standing by the bed as if she owned it, as if . . .

"This is Eva, Mammy."

"Eva?"

"We are going to be married."

"I wanted to come and see—to meet Dick's grandmother . . ."

I wanted to come see her die. That's what she meant. Why didn't she finish and say it out. She had come to lick her chops and see what she would enjoy. That's what she had come for, the lying little slut. The richest acres in Long Gourd valley, so rich hit'd make yer feet greasy to walk over'm, Saul Oberly at the first tollgate had told the peddler once, and the peddler had told it to her, knowing it would please and make her trade. *Before you die.* Well, why didn't you finish it out? You might as well. You've given yourself away.

Her fierce thoughts dried up the water in her eyes, tired and resting far back in their sockets. They burned like a smothered fire stirred up by the wind as they traveled over the woman who would lie in her bed, eat with her silver, and caress her flesh and blood. The woman's body was soft enough to melt and pour about him. She could see that; and her firm, round breasts, too firm and round for any good to come from them. And her lips, full and red, her eyes bright and cunning. The heavy hair crawled about her head to tangle the poor, foolish boy in its ropes. She might have known he would do something foolish like this. He had a foolish mother. There warn't any way to avoid it. But look at her belly, small and no-count. There wasn't a muscle the size of a worm as she could see. And those hips—

And then she heard her voice: "What did you say her name was, son? Eva? Eva Callahan, I'm glad to meet you, Eva. Where'd your folks come from, Eva? I knew some Callahans who lived in the Goosepad settlement. They couldn't be any of your kin, could they?"

"Oh, no, indeed. My people . . ."

"Right clever people they were. And good farmers, too. Worked hard. Honest—that is, most of 'm. As honest as that run of people go. We always gave them a good name."

"My father and mother live in Birmingham. Have always lived there."

"Birmingham," she heard herself say with contempt. They could have lived there all their lives and still come from somewhere. I've got a mule older 'n Birmingham. "What's your pa's name?"

"Her father is Mister E. L. Callahan, Mammy."

"First name not Elijah by any chance? Lige they called him."

"No. Elmore, Mammy."

"Old Mason Callahan had a son they called Lige. Somebody told me he moved to Elyton. So you think you're going to live with the boy here."

"We're to be married . . . that is, if Eva doesn't change her mind."

And she saw his arm slip possessively about the woman's waist. "Well, take care of him, young woman, or I'll come back and han't you. I'll come back and claw your eyes out."

"I'll take very good care of him, Mrs. McCowan."

"I can see that." She could hear the threat in her voice, and Eva heard it.

"Young man," spoke up Doctor Edwin, "you should feel powerful set up, two such women pestering each other about you."

The boy kept an embarrassed silence.

"All of you get out now. I want to talk to him by himself. I've got a lot to say and precious little time to say it in. And he's mighty young and helpless and ignorant."

"Why, Mammy, you forget I'm a man now. Twenty-six. All teeth cut. Long trousers."

"It takes a heap more than pants to make a man. Throw open them blinds, Ants."

"Yes'm."

"You don't have to close the door so all-fired soft. Close it naturally. And you can tip about all you want to—later. I won't be hurried to the burying ground. And keep your head away from that door. What I've got to say to your new master is private."

"Listen at you, Mistiss."

"You listen to me. That's all. No, wait. I had something else on my mind—what is it? Yes. How many hens has Melissy set? You don't know? Find out. A few of the old hens ought to be setting. Tell her to be careful to turn the turkey eggs every day. No, you bring them and set them under my bed. I'll make sure. We got a mighty pore hatch last year. You may go now. I'm plumb worn out, boy, worn out thinking for these people. It's that that worries a body down. But you'll know all about it in good time.

Stand out there and let me look at you good. You don't let me see enough of you, and I almost forget how you look. Not really, you understand. Just a little. It's your own fault. I've got so much to trouble me that you, when you're not here, naturally slip back in my mind. But that's all over now. You are here to stay, and I'm here to go. There will always be Long Gourd, and there must always be a McCowan on it. I had hoped to have you by me for several years, but you would have your fling in town. I thought it best to clear your blood of it, but as God is hard, I can't see what you find to do in town. And now you've gone and gotten you a woman. Well, they all have to do it. But do you reckon you've picked the right one—you must forgive the frankness of an old lady who can see the bottom of her grave—I had in mind one of the Carlisle girls. The Carlisle place lies so handy to Long Gourd and would give me a landing on the river. Have you seen Anna Belle since she's grown to be a woman? I'm told there's not a better housekeeper in the valley."

"I'm sure Anna Belle is a fine girl. But, Mammy, I love Eva."

"She'll wrinkle up on you, Son; and the only wrinkles land gets can be smoothed out by the harrow. And she looks sort of puny to me, Son. She's powerful small in the waist and walks about like she had worms."

"Gee, Mammy, you're not jealous are you? That waist is in style."

"You want to look for the right kind of style in a woman. Old Mrs. Penter Matchem had two daughters with just such waists, but 'twarnt natural. She would tie their corset strings to the bed posts and whip'm out with a buggy whip. The poor girls never drew a hearty breath. Just to please that old woman's vanity. She got paid in kind. It did something to Eliza's bowels and she died before she was twenty. The other one never had any children. She used to whip'm out until they cried. I never liked that woman. She thought a whip could do anything."

"Well, anyway, Eva's small waist wasn't made by any corset strings. She doesn't wear any."

"How do you know, sir?"

"Well . . . I . . . What a question for a respectable woman to ask."

"I'm not a respectable woman. No woman can be respectable and run four thousand acres of land. Well, you'll have it your own way. I suppose the safest place for a man to take his folly is to bed."

"Mammy!"

"You must be lenient with your Cousin George. He wanders about night times talking about the War. I put him off in the west wing where he won't keep people awake, but sometimes he gets in the yard and gives orders to his troops. 'I will sweep that hill, General'—and many's the time he's done it when the battle was doubtful—'I'll sweep it with my iron brooms'; then he shouts out his orders, and pretty soon the dogs commence to barking. But he's been a heap of company for me. You must see that your wife humors him. It won't be for long. He's mighty feeble."

"Eva's not my wife yet, Mammy."

"You won't be free much longer—the way she looks at you, like a hungry hound."

"I was just wondering," he said hurriedly. "I hate to talk about anything like this . . ."

"Everybody has a time to die, and I'll have no maudlin nonsense about mine."

"I was wondering about Cousin George . . . if I could get somebody to keep him. You see, it will be difficult in the winters. Eva will want to spend the winters in town . . ."

He paused, startled, before the great bulk of his grandmother rising from her pillows, and in the silence that frightened the air, his unfinished words hung suspended about them.

After a moment he asked if he should call the doctor.

It was some time before she could find words to speak.

"Get out of the room."

"Forgive me, Mammy. You must be tired."

"I'll send for you," sounded the dead voice in the still room, "when I want to see you again. I'll send for you and—the woman."

She watched the door close quietly on his neat square back. Her head whirled and turned like a flying jennet. She lowered and steadied it on the pillows. Four thousand acres of the richest land in the valley he would sell and squander on that slut, and he didn't even know it and there was no way to warn him. This terrifying thought rushed through her mind, and she felt the bed shake with her pain, while before the footboard the spectre of an old sin rose up to mock her. How she had struggled to get

this land and keep it together—through the War, the Reconstruction, and the pleasanter after days. For eighty-seven years she had suffered and slept and planned and rested and had pleasure in this valley, seventy of it, almost a turning century, on this place; and now that she must leave it . . .

The things she had done to keep it together. No. The one thing . . . from the dusty stacks the musty odor drifted through the room, met the tobacco smoke over the long table piled high with records, reports. Iva Louise stood at one end, her hat clinging perilously to the heavy auburn hair, the hard blue eyes and the voice:

"You promised Pa to look after me"—she had waited for the voice to break and scream—"and you have stolen my land!"

"Now, Miss Iva Louise," the lawyer dropped his empty eyes along the floor, "you don't mean . . ."

"Yes, I do mean it."

Her own voice had restored calm to the room: "I promised your pa his land would not be squandered."

"My husband won't squander my property. You just want it for yourself."

She cut through the scream with the sharp edge of her scorn: "What about that weakling's farm in Madison? Who pays the taxes now?"

The girl had no answer to that. Desperate, she faced the lawyer: "Is there no way, sir, I can get my land from the clutches of this unnatural woman?"

The man coughed; the red rim of his eyes watered with embarrassment: "I'm afraid," he cleared his throat, "you say you can't raise the money . . . I'm afraid—"

That trapped look as the girl turned away. It had come back to her, now trapped in her bed. As a swoon spreads, she felt the desperate terror of weakness, more desperate where there has been strength. Did the girl see right? Had she stolen the land because she wanted it?

Suddenly, like the popping of a thread in a loom, the struggles of the flesh stopped, and the years backed up and covered her thoughts like the spring freshet she had seen so many times creep over the dark soil. Not in order but, as if they were stragglers trying to catch up, the events of her life passed before her sight that had never been so clear. Sweeping over

the mounds of her body rising beneath the quilts came the old familiar odors—the damp, strong, penetrating smell of new-turned ground; the rank, clinging, resistless odor of green-picked feathers stuffed in a pillow by Guinea Nell, thirty odd years ago; tobacco on the mantel, clean and sharp like smelling salts; her father's sweat, sweet like stale oil; the powerful ammonia of manure turned over in a stall; curing hay in the wind; the polecat's stink on the night air, almost pleasant, a sort of commingled scent of all the animals, man and beast; the dry smell of dust under a rug; the over-strong scent of too-sweet fruit trees blooming; the inhospitable wet ashes of a dead fire in a poor white's cabin; black Rebeccah in the kitchen; a wet hound steaming before a fire. There were other odors she could not identify, overwhelming her, making her weak, taking her body and drawing out of it a choking longing to hover over all that she must leave, the animals, the fences, the crops growing in the fields, the houses, the people in them . . .

It was early summer, and she was standing in the garden after dark—she had heard something after the small chickens. Mericy and Yellow Jane passed beyond the paling fence. Dark shadows—gay, full voices. *Where you gwine, gal? I dunno. Jest a-gwine. Where you? To the frolic, do I live. Well, stay off'n yoe back tonight.* Then out of the rich, gushing laughter: *All right, you stay off'n yourn. I done caught de stumbles.* More laughter.

The face of Uncle Ike, head man in slavery days, rose up. A tall Senagalese, he was standing in the crib of the barn unmoved before the bushwhackers. *Nigger, whar is that gold hid? You better tell us, nigger. Down in the well; in the far-place. By God, you black son of a bitch, we'll roast ye alive if you air too contrary to tell. Now, listen ole nigger, Miss McCowan ain't nothen to you no more. You been set free. We'll give ye some of it, a whole sack. Come on, now*—out of the dribbling, leering mouth—*whar air it?* Ike's tall form loomed towards the shadows. In the lamp flame his forehead shone like the point, the core of night. He stood there with no word for answer. As she saw the few white beads of sweat on his forehead, she spoke.

She heard her voice reach through the dark—*you turn that black man loose.* A pause and then—*I know your kind. In better days you'd slip around and set people's barns afire. You shirked the War to live off the*

old and weak. You don't spare me because I'm a woman. You'd shoot a woman quicker because she has the name of being frail. Well, I'm not frail, and my Navy Six an't frail. Ike, take their guns. Ike moved and one of them raised his pistol arm. He dropped it, and the acrid smoke stung her nostrils. *Now, Ike, get the rest of their weapons. Their knives, too. One of us might turn our backs.*

On top of the shot she heard the soft pat of her servants' feet. White eyeballs shining through the cracks in the barn. Then: *Caesar, Al, Zebedee, step in here and lend a hand to Ike.* By sun the people had gathered in the yard. Uneasy, silent, they watched her on the porch. She gave the word, and the whips cracked. The mules strained, trotted off, skittish and afraid, dragging the white naked bodies bouncing and cursing over the sod: *Turn us loose. We'll not bother ye no more, lady. You ain't no woman, you're a devil.* She turned and went into the house. It is strange how a woman gets hard when trouble comes a-gobbling after her people.

Worn from memory, she closed her eyes to stop the whirl, but closing her eyes did no good. She released the lids and did not resist. Brother Jack stood before her, handsome and shy, but ruined from his cradle by a cleft palate, until he came to live only in the fire of spirits. And she understood, so clear was life, down to the smallest things. She had often heard tell of this clarity that took a body whose time was spending on the earth. Poor Brother Jack, the gentlest of men, but because of his mark, made the butt and wit of the valley. She saw him leave for school, where he was sent to separate him from his drinking companions, to a church school where the boys buried their liquor in the ground and sipped it up through straws. His letters: *Dear Ma, quit offering so much advice and send me more money. You send barely enough to keep me from stealing.* His buggy wheels scraping the gravel, driving up as the first roosters crowed. *Katharine, Malcolm, I thought you might want to have a little conversation.* Conversation two hours before sun! And down she would come and let him in, and the General would get up, stir up the fire, and they would sit down and smoke. Jack would drink and sing, *If the Little Brown Jug was mine, I'd be drunk all the time and I'd never be sob-er a-gin*—or, *Hog drovers, hog drovers, hog drovers we air, a-courting your darter so sweet and so fair.* They would sit and smoke and drink until she got up to ring the bell.

He stayed as long as the whiskey held out, growing more violent towards the end. She watered his bottles; begged whiskey to make camphor —*Gre't God, Sis Kate, do you sell camphor? I gave you a pint this morning.* Poor Brother Jack, killed in Breckinridge's charge at Murfreesboro, cut in two by a chain shot from an enemy gun. All night long she had sat up after the message came. His body scattered about a splintered black gum tree. She had seen that night, as if she had been on the field, the parties moving over the dark field hunting the wounded and dead. Clyde Bascom had fallen near Jack with a bad hurt. They were messmates. He had to tell somebody; and somehow she was the one he must talk to. The spectral lanterns, swinging towards the dirge of pain and the monotonous cries of *Water,* caught by the river dew on the before-morning air and held suspended over the field in its acrid quilt. There death dripped to mildew the noisy throats . . . and all the while relief parties, or maybe it was the burial parties, moving, blots of night, sullenly moving in the viscous blackness.

Her eyes widened, and she looked across the foot posts into the room. There was some mistake, some cruel blunder; for there now, tipping about the carpet, hunting in her wardrobe, under the bed, blowing down the fire to its ashes until they glowed in their dryness, stalked the burial parties. They stepped out of the ashes in twos and threes, hunting, hunting and shaking their heads. Whom were they searching for? Jack had long been buried. They moved more rapidly; looked angry. They crowded the room until she gasped for breath. One, gaunt and haggard, jumped on the foot of her bed; rose to the ceiling; gesticulated; argued in animated silence. He leaned forward; pressed his hand upon her leg. She tried to tell him to take it off. Cold and crushing heavy, it pressed her down to the bowels of the earth. Her lips trembled, but no sound came forth. Now the hand moved up to her stomach; and the haggard eyes looked gravely at her, alert, as if they were waiting for something. Her head turned giddy. She called to Dick, to Ants, to Doctor Ed; but the words struck her teeth and fell back in her throat. She concentrated on lifting the words, and the burial parties sadly shook their heads. Always the cries struck her teeth and fell back down. She strained to hear the silence they made. At last from a great distance she thought she heard . . . *too late* . . . *too late.* How exquisite

the sound, like a bell swinging without ringing. Suddenly it came to her. She was dying.

How slyly death slipped up on a body, like sleep moving over the vague boundary. How many times she had laid awake to trick the unconscious there. At last she would know . . . But she wasn't ready. She must first do something about Long Gourd. That slut must not eat it up. She would give it to the hands first. He must be brought to understand this. But the spectres shook their heads. Well let them shake. She'd be damned if she would go until she was ready to go. She'd be damned all right, and she smiled at the meaning the word took on now. She gathered together all the particles of her will; the spectres faded; and there about her were the anxious faces of kin and servants. Edwin had his hands under the cover feeling her legs. She made to raise her own hand to the boy. It did not go up. Her eyes wanted to roll upward and look behind her forehead, but she pinched them down and looked at her grandson.

"You want to say something, Mammy?"—she saw his lips move.

She had a plenty to say, but her tongue had somehow got glued to her lips. Truly it was now too late. Her will left her. Life withdrawing gathered like a frosty dew on her skin. The last breath blew gently past her nose. The dusty nostrils tingled. She felt a great sneeze coming. There was a roaring; the wind blew through her head once, and a great cotton field bent before it, growing and spreading, the bolls swelling as big as cotton sacks and bursting white as thunderheads. From a distance, out of the far end of the field, under a sky so blue that it was painful-bright, voices came singing, *Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho—Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, and the walls come a-tumbling down.*

THE GINSING GATHERERS

Howell Vines

THE ELDERLY man and the youngish woman pulled off their shoes and waded the Glaze Shoals in the Little River and came out on the other side not far above the mouth of Glaze Creek. They had left their home across the river on the tip end of the bluff that overlooked the whole Glaze Bend with its rich bottom farm and dense cane brakes. The four o'clocks were open over there in the yard and two powerful and smart dogs were at home to protect the fowls from small varmints and keep the wolves and panthers scared away at night so that the sheep and calves would not be molested in their stables. And in daylight the purple martins or the jaybirds, or both, would keep the hawks scared away from the fowls. The married son would turn out the sheep and calves the next morning and put them up at night.

The "ginsing" season of the year had come and the muscadines were also ripe, and the man and woman were off on a little journey up the length of Glaze Creek and a little beyond to gather ginsing and eat muscadines. The wild fruit and herb hunt would end with a sojourn over the week-end at a neighbor's house about four miles away and near the famous Indian spring where Glaze Creek started. But as for the muscadines, they would eat them just to be doing and for enjoyment, as they could hardly work in the fields, or fish, or walk in the fowl range along the river and below the bluff and hillside without being under a river-muscadine arbor. They were really after ginsing and meant to turn it into gold. Glaze was the man's name and he had given his name to the creek, the bend, and the shoals.

Daniel was his given name and Sookie was the woman's given name. Daniel found a girl strange to the country on the bank of the river one day and took her home with him; and that night they started living together as man and wife and had been doing it ever since. She said her name was Sookie and that was all she told him, or so he always said. Daniel was a little stocky, and dark in mien; and Sookie was dark as dusk, and as deep, and built, one could tell, around tendons of great strength and passion.

They were simply out for mutual enjoyment in the woods as had been their custom together for some ten or twelve years. She was a young girl when he got her, for shortly after he had buried his Cherokee wife—the mother of his children—on the bank of the river, Daniel found Sookie and they took up together. Making their something to eat and wear, and spend —on yearly wagon trips to the little capital town of Tuscaloosa about seventy-five miles away—was an easy matter, considering that all this grew in the rich bottom land and in the woods, and in the river, for them while they slept. They followed the creek's course and stopped to fill their sacks whenever they came to the black soil against the coves and foothills where the beeches grew. Wherever Daniel could find beeches standing and dropping mast from which he tolled his mast-fattened hogs there he was almost certain to find ginsing growing. Eating muscadines wherever they found them was only incidental to these pauses for the ginsing roots, as was fondling each other, and it was no great trouble to fill two sacks in the tuber patches splotched up and down the mazy banks of the tiny creek.

And this year they meant sure enough to find a Chinaman somewhere, if possible, and turn these ginsing roots into gold. They might not be able to do it in Tuscaloosa but they ought to in Mobile. If necessary, Daniel would get up a flat-bottomed boat trip to Mobile and try to see a Chinaman. He had in his time helped engineer numerous boat trips to Mobile in the winter time and early spring and he would get up another one if together they failed to see a Chinaman in Tuscaloosa. People said Chinamen had crossed the great water; and he sincerely hoped that at least one had been dribbled in to the new state of Alabama and found himself in the capital town. But failing in Tuscaloosa, there was the thought of Mobile. He could stop at Demopolis on the way down. And he could find out about Monte-

vallo and Huntsville. One thing certain, he meant to get in touch with the first Chinaman to come to Alabama.

Once he could find some Chinamen, fabulous riches were growing in patches as big as his house all around him. And Sookie was with him, if not ahead of him, in all this. Ginsing was about as plentiful as the mast on which his hogs and the squirrels fattened or the beggar lice on which his cows fed. It was as bountiful as poke sallet which they themselves fed on every spring, or sassafras from the roots of which they made tea every winter. When Daniel or Sookie had indigestion, they could chew a ginsing root and get well; and they could trade it to the stores in Tuscaloosa for provisions, but that seemed a small matter when a Chinaman would give you a pound of gold for a pound of ginsing. Pound for pound: that's the way it was. And if they once located a Chinaman or two, the white-flowering ginsing in the spring would become their fallen stars and they would visit them just to look and admire against the time they could pull up the roots in late summer and early fall. Why, already they loved to see the flowers in spring and note how the seed pods increased each bed year by year even as they gathered. And if they would let the roots grow they would get bigger and heavier every year until they would be sights to look at. That new bend up the Little River he had bought back at the land sale, why, he would let the three-leaved and five-leaved herb take the top of all the black ground there. Already it was as thick as heartleaves there. Some of the tubers were as big as his arm, and they would get bigger and bigger in the ground as the catfish and turtles did in the river. Going after a sack of gold would be like going to the beech woods. That was the size of it. He had plenty as it was, but naturally he wanted to be rich. If enough Chinamen would come within reach before he died he would be as rich as doe's cream. That was the problem and all there was to it.

Daniel and Sookie stopped to rest and cool off a little, and compute their ginsing at the spring at the head of Glaze Creek. The little creek and the Cherokees had made the spring famous. The man and woman they were going to see had lived there a little while but had moved out to where they then lived to more cleared ground. Sookie was lying back against the green bank by the spring while Daniel fooled around picking up Indian arrowheads at the old shop place left by the blacksmith who had moved out from

the rolling ridge to good open land. He saw a big coachwhip wrapped around a half-grown rabbit, and he teased it to get it to run him. He picked up a white flint rock and chunked at it and the coachwhip looked him over. He made a fuss at the snake and the snake licked out its tongue at him and complied with the worst fuss it could make. Then it uncoiled the rabbit and started for him, and ran him down the bank to the creek, which was called a branch that far up. One had to say, "That's Glaze Creek," or think the thought to recognize it as Glaze Creek there. When Daniel stopped to get something to kill it with, the snake balanced itself on a big embedded rock right over his head, opened its mouth, and made its scariest fuss. That was the climax and Daniel outran the snake to where Sookie sprawled back, looking at the daylight, and did not try to bother the snake any more. He laughed and shivered pleasantly and Sookie joined him.

It took no more than such as this to show Daniel and Sookie a good time and get up a pleasant conversation and a big laugh between them. Anything, just so it thicketed them together more. Daniel had learned to live the thickety life with the Cherokees as tutors and a Cherokee woman as helpmate and partner in daylight and in the dark to such a degree of perfection that he became one of their leaders and their spokesman to the whites. His own farm home and his summer home were filled with Indian utensils, relics, and trinkets such as "tommy hawks," bows and arrows, shawls and blankets. His neighbors could only guess at the Indian secrets he knew, for Daniel played shutmouth along that line. He wouldn't talk, the neighbors said. He had opened up to one person only, his son Daniel—the first white child born in the country—who was then married and raising a family of his own with a white girl, directly across the river from his father. In fact, Little Daniel had sons to whom he was beginning to open up Cherokee secrets. The two Daniel Glazes conversed in the Cherokee tongue as often as in English when off together. There were some important things Daniel had kept from Sookie so that she felt that she hardly knew him. But to compensate for this he never pressed her about her life before he found her, a newcomer in the river country.

Nevertheless, Sookie understood him pretty well and knew the way to his heart. She knew how to enjoy life with him so well that their neighbors said they were as happy as "fee-larks" together. On this day their minds had

traveled with them so that they had forgotten the four o'clocks in the yard at home, and the purple martins. When they tried, they could give themselves to the four o'clocks and hold back nothing and virtually be one of the martins; but when they were in the woods, they were in the woods. There their minds traveled like squirrels traveling in the timber, or the Indian hens through it, or the ground-hogs under it. At times their minds sped through the timber like the red deer or to a branch like a mink or a weasel. They had seen so many of all the wild animals while out in the woods together that they could go to sleep of nights counting them up and seeing them again. People said that Daniel had buried himself in the woods. At first a Cherokee woman was buried with him. And some said that later he buried himself deeper with Sookie. Others said that he had buried a white girl with him just as the Cherokee girl had buried him with her. At any rate, Daniel and Sookie played and wallowed and rolled around at the head of the creek, lay down on their all-fours to drink from the spring, and then walked on out the wagon road to Jack Smith's and Alice's house. On the way, there wasn't a step but what they could touch some kind of a tree and keep walking in the road.

II

Alice Smith looked down the spring path and saw them coming. "I see Daniel and Sookie coming," she said. "And they're out gatherin' ginsing of course. They've got their sacks full."

"Yes, it's Daniel and Sookie—I might say Daniel and Ginsing," Jack said. "And I just as soon see the old devil and his wife coming as to see them strollops. They'll stay out their welcome. You can bet your bottom dollar on that."

Some of the children and a visiting boy—one of the Waldrops—heard the conversation.

Jack Smith never had known anybody as well fixed as Daniel Glaze who wanted to strollop around so. Neither had Alice. Or anybody else for that matter. Not on the Warrior River or back on the Savannah River in Georgia —and across in South Carolina—where they had come from to the spank-fired new state. Daniel had learned it from the Cherokees and that Cherokee wife of his. They were all gadabouts. They didn't know anything else. That Sookie had made him worse in his old days. An old man had no business

taking up with a girl even if he did discover her. That woman couldn't be still at the house like a decent woman was supposed to. They had followed the wild animals so that Daniel was just like one of them, let alone Sookie. That was the reason the Indians never had anything. They went forth and called on the spirits of spots, or places, and streams as Daniel said. That was their religion. It was a traveling sort of religion. Animals traveled, and so did Daniel and his mate. No other woman would be content to leave the martins and jaybirds in charge of the chickens and guineas and things. But since they bet on the martins that way, they did see to it that the martins stayed with them even after they had raised. Daniel raised a patch of what he called his martin-gourds every year and kept putting up more poles. Somehow or other he charmed them. They had up an understanding it seemed. Daniel said birds could tell when you loved them to the bones. He said he loved the very hearts of the purple martins and made them know it. He made them appreciate him as their friend, he said, but he gave all the credit to the Cherokees. Whenever you saw a martin at your house you could safely say, "There's one of Daniel's martins."

Daniel and Sookie and deep dusk came to the Smith homestead at one and the same time. "Light, hitch, and come in, as Uncle Cape used to say," Jack said. Alice bade them come in and make themselves at home. It developed that they were all getting along the best kind.

Daniel gave Jack a going-over for not coming across the river and helping him drink rum. He had kept a jug named for Jack Smith from his friends Tommy Lisper and Tommy Prescott and was still looking to some good fellowship over the jug with Jack. He always tried to make it a point to get over a jug of likker with each good friend at least once a year. And Sookie gave them a going-over for not coming over the river and helping them eat watermelons. They had had the *most* of them. The only way to enjoy watermelons to the fullest was to have your friends visit you and help you eat them. Why, watermelons grew like "punkins" for them on the river bank. It was fun to see how much they would grow overnight. Jack and Alice had just not had time to get over; but they would get over there one of these days. "We'll come when you're not expecting us, Daniel," Jack said.

The men folk went to the lot to see about feeding the things while the women folk remained in the kitchen preparing supper. It was a sumptuous meal fit to weight down the revolving table and fill the large family and visitors besides. One thing Daniel had schooled Sookie in to perfection. He had taught her to cook as his Cherokee wife cooked before her. Thus Sookie naturally told Alice again, as she had time before, how she cooked according to the Cherokees. So the two women actually enjoyed themselves telling each other how they cooked.

Sookie's cooking was more like a man's cooking out in the woods or on the river. Say camped out on a wild hog hunt or a midnight supper on a coon hunt at night, or a fish gigging where the fish are cooked on the spot. When she prepared "rosenears" for the table, she roasted them in the shucks in coals. She not only fried fish in the skillet but baked it in a shuck in the coals as well. And she would bake fish on a hot rock. The best way to cook cornbread or flourbread was to bury it in the coals and have roasted hoe-cakes. Ash cake, she called it. Alice roasted her sweet potatoes in the coals and ashes and that was all. And Sookie had to tell her all about the stews and fixments and messes she made of herbs from the riverbank, fish and turtles from the river, and game from the woods. Daniel's house was noted for its dried fish and dried venison and beef, and Sookie talked a blue streak about that. Alice in turn cooked everything in the old-time white woman's way by boiling, baking, or frying—and sometimes broiling over the log fireheap in the fireplace. The supper consisted of victuals from the garden and field, the bread barrel, and the smoke house prepared in this way, plus milk from the spring served in big goblets and butter served in a huge bowl with much milk still in it. It was a supper the Glazes enjoyed the best kind, and certainly appreciated as a change, but it would have been hard to have eaten a meal at their house without eating fresh eating from the mast or canebrakes, or fish from the river, or dried meat of some kind from the woods. They could not have lived and done well on so many vegetables and field crops all the time as they knew the Smiths mostly did. There was plenty of cured hog meat from the smoke house or the Glazes would have been at a loss even while enjoying the sumptuous change of fare.

III

On the front porch Daniel was explaining how thunder killed turkeys in the egg. He was going into details and speaking from personal experiences. He said that was the reason turkeys do not raise more in the woods than they do. If every close clap of thunder that came did not kill them in the egg they would raise so fast that they would be as plentiful in the woods as partridges or jorees. And that might not be a good thing, for that many turkeys would tear up the ground and take the country.

Daniel and the grown boys were talking of going down in Jack's branch field and catching a coon or two, when, all of a sudden, the wolves came in from the head of Black Creek or the mouth of Wolf Creek and tried to get to the sheep in the stable. This scared the children in bed and got up a general excitement, and a "sicking" on of the dogs. Jack's cur and hound were joined by Bill Glaze's cur and hound who ran over to investigate, and the race was on towards the fork of the creeks. Bill Glaze was Daniel's cousin who had come into the Indian realm on the river with Daniel. It was a moonlight night and there were paths to follow, and Daniel fled after the dogs without looking to see who was going with him. Such as this excited him. He had to get out and follow the dogs regardless. Without saying a word, Sookie and the grown boys followed.

Jack and Alice sat on the porch, thinking about the Glazes and talking. They talked about Daniel and his two brothers and cousin who were the first whites to enter the country. They had respect for Bill Glaze, their near neighbor, who had waited for more whites to come in and married a good white girl. Indeed they had been glad for one of their girls to marry one of Bill's boys. He had helped replenish the new country in the good old Bible way just as they had seen it done back in Georgia and across the river in Carolina. Daniel and Bill were raising up two different races of dogs entirely. Each race had its own kind of sharpness. But the Smiths were all for Bill and his set and against the wild life of Daniel's set. They believed in education and training. People were like animals. They had to be trained. They had to be schooled and not by peckerwoods and soft-shelled "turkles" and wild hogs. This raising children up in the woods to be regular old ground hogs would not do. They spoke with great respect when mentioning Daniel's brother Tom, who traded around with him until he finally hung

in at Tuscaloosa and became the first banker there. They knew very little about their brother Bill, who stayed on a while longer with Daniel and finally went to Tom in Tuscaloosa. They had heard that he followed the Indians into Mississippi.

Daniel was too wild a flower for them. They would not go that deep into the woods. They looked back to the garden flowers the Glaze boys had been back in Charleston. Daniel had thrown himself away and could have done better. He had buried himself in the woods first with a Cherokee woman and then with a strolloping, no 'count, low-down, ignorant white girl. A cultivated, well-educated South Carolinian of Charleston had turned ground hog. He was at first as well prepared for a political career as anybody in Charleston. Daniel had it in him to be somebody. And as long as he was legislator representing the Two-Warriors territory at Cahaba and Tuscaloosa it seemed that he had found himself. But the woods finally closed in on him forever, once the Indian questions had been settled. Now he would be a fit representative for the beavers and otters but not for human beings who believed in progress. He was a good example of what the woods would do to a man if he let himself go. He would go wild and mate with anything that came along just so it was a woman. He had forgotten his A B C's and she never had learned them. It was a sight to see the fine Charleston furniture and stuff Daniel had in his farm home and his summer home and think what he had come to. It was something to study about.

The dogs ran the wolves along Black Creek and on across Dividing Ridge, down Cymbling Branch and into the Short Creek country where Tommy Lisper and his boys lived. All this time Daniel and Sookie kicked around and found themselves in several beds of ginsing and heartleaves against the spots where the beeches grew; and the boys went to the branch field, where the coons had been eating the corn, to see how things looked. Tomorrow ginsing could be gathered there and maybe some roots shaped like a man could be found. If that could be done, it would help out when a Chinaman was found. People said it would make a Chinaman fall all over himself and mumble. Some of these stems had five leaves, too. That would bear investigation the next day. How much a wealthy Chinaman would give to be able to walk in the beech shades and kick around in ginsing and heartleaves! From the way the heartleaves smelled, Chinamen ought to be

able to turn them into something valuable. People said these Chinamen believed ginsing would *cure* anything. And a root shaped like a man would *do* anything. If the Chinamen knew about this country they would come over here and settle if they could get permission.

While milling around in this way the Warrior River pair happened upon a doe and some slinks licking salt at a salt lick in a boggy place near a spring. Their hearts beat like bluebirds flitting about in a limb, and in the moonlight night the deer looked white as sheep. Daniel was glad that he had no weapon, not even one of his bows and arrows. It was a picture of heaven to the man and woman with the timber-traveling minds. It took Daniel back to many inspirations such as these encountered with his Cherokee mate out in the woods when their hearts burrowed the earth and drew them down wallowing. Back then they always went out—day or night—and sought such benediction scenes when they wanted to be most intimate with one another. They believed that children should come from such times and that such a child bore a charmed life. Under such circumstances as these he had had the red deer follow him and his mate nearly home. Partly because of such incidents the idea got abroad that the red deer were not afraid of the Cherokees and would even follow them. Daniel told Sookie that the deer mostly followed the Cherokees west—that they had very few deer left compared to what they had when he came to the country. They were afraid of the whites for more reasons than their guns. The red deer were important in the timber-traveling religion Daniel was converted to when he mated with the Cherokee girl.

Following the benevolence of this scene, Daniel and Sookie entered into an intimacy such as Daniel used to enter with his Cherokee wife. Sookie had learned to expect her best times with Daniel upon such occasions and in such spots. He did not believe in the house for such intimacies and neither did Sookie. That's what Daniel liked about Sookie. She had a mind, and a heart, and a body for the woods; and that is what others did not know about her. Daniel had more passion than Jack Smith could appreciate and so did Sookie. No other girl in the country since the native girls had gone west could have matched Daniel even with old age coming upon him. He had wanted to live through such scenes as this with every beautiful grown girl he ever had seen and end up by being buried on the spot. But he con-

sidered the Cherokee girls best for such a life except an occasional white girl like Sookie. The Indian girls could best enter into the earthy religion of it all. Oftentimes he wished he could single out these grown girls with the earthy religion in their hearts and experience life with them one by one on the spots all over the river world, and die with them as people said some fish die after such action and be buried in a green bank in the same hole with them. His idea of heaven was to be a young god of the woods, forever living intensely enough to kill and being ever intense enough for an awakened life. That, however, he knew would make a man the equal of the Supreme Being and could not be. In his ordinary moments when he considered this mating business he thought that any man ought to be mighty glad to marry any woman. That was the plan of life. Almost any girl would answer and answer well so that she would be a blessing if taught right. Few if any normal women were at fault if they were not benedictions to their husbands. He believed that almost any normal woman could follow the greatest of men. There were great men and ordinary men and sorry men. But most all women could be great if given the right man.

IV

In the morning it was Saturday. Jack Smith usually spent sweet Saturdays in his blacksmith shop. No matter what the work through the week, he always reserved Saturday for his mendings and creations at the forge and anvil. He was known as a good horse master. All of his boys were talented smiths. People said that it ran in the Smith blood. They could make anything and do anything in a blacksmith shop. They could please themselves and thought they could please God best when in a shop using their heads to invent and their hands to fashion. A man was given a mind to guide the hand in its creations in the blacksmith shop, to farm, to read the Bible, the almanac, and pieces of paper. All of the Smiths believed in knowledge as such and in doing things. But that morning the man from across the river and his mate were there in the way. The Smiths, however, would not have been in the way of the Glazes if they had been across the river that morning. Perhaps the Glazes would have taken them into the woods to show them or tell them something, or down to the river. The Glazes believed in knowledge that carried feeling with it. Going about the comfortable Glaze home place would in itself have been like being in the

woods, for Daniel and Sookie made their home place, which showed beautifully that human beings used there, seem like a part of the green thicket. But the Smith home place was another kind of using place which tallied not at all with the using places of the red deer. Nevertheless, the Glazes enjoyed the change of scene and the contact with other minds. Sookie enjoyed it primarily because Daniel did. They were both fond of the growing Smith girls. Some of the children resented this and some did not. The boys simply enjoyed hearing Daniel talk and did not mind Sookie, for she was Daniel's dough-baker and bed-fellow.

Daniel hung around the shop and kept Jack in a bad humor. Sookie hung around the house and garden and worried Alice a little and interested her some, especially when telling about the Chinaman they hoped to find in town. Jack was a firm and fractious man. He had what was called the Smith fits. That is, he had mad spells, and Daniel brought on these mad spells that morning. Two or three times between watermelon cuttings in the shop and at the house Jack Smith threw his hammer against the shop walls and mildly blasphemed it, the unsatisfactory work he was doing, and all that. Daniel tried to tell him things about the work that made him wall his eyes and want to spit fire.

However, the men got to talking about the Bible and this was a god-send part of the time. Smith was a great Bible reader, although he was not such a terribly religious man. Daniel had read the Bible a good bit in his time but had quit as he had quit other books long before. Like a stroke from this talk on the Scriptures Smith said, "I'm just as glad that there's a devil and a hell as I am that there's a God and heaven." He was known for this idea. The young people thought it was an infidelity or something bordering that but often decided he was right about it when they grew older and knew more about the earth life. Daniel knew enough about the earth life to appreciate the idea and said so. But his idea of hell was not Smith's idea, and he said it was not. The one thought hell was a place of fire and brimstone and the other thought it was a state of being lost and desolate in some place. Hell to Daniel was a place where there were no friendly spirits of spots and none of the earthiness that they congregate to. Smith adduced all this to Daniel's having buried himself in the woods, kept the thought to himself, and got mad at his hammer again.

But the men did agree on the Bible in many places. They agreed on it when it spoke on the man and woman business. Smith never thought of the women and girls as nymphs, and consequently never talked about them from that angle. But he had thought about them in many of the good old Bible ways and could lead any conversation along these lines. Daniel thought there was little difference in the end between the Bible on women and his own thickety ideas on women and he was right there with Smith when he said, "You see, the man that made this world and his legal advisers made a blunder when they made a man without a woman. They seen it wouldn't work. They was experimenting. They seen their mistake when they seen all the man's blunders and mismanagements." The two dark-featured and well-built pioneers got together on this and enjoyed themselves mutually. And Smith went on, "You take me and let me get old and some sixteen or eighteen year old girl come along and I'll want her. If Alice was to be dead, I'd want to marry her. I'd take up with her somehow or other or bust a gut. And if I was to marry the girl, she could ride me a bug hunting to the bluff and make me jump off and think it was fun. A young woman can do to an old man any way under the sun. You take that beautiful young girl who warmed King David's bed. If he'd been left alone with her he'd a give her his kingdom and him a man after God's own heart. The Lord knows we're weak that way and He don't fall out with us for that weakness." They agreed again and Daniel said that Sookie was like the women back in King Solomon's time. She was easy to get along with. Women honored the men folk back then. Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines and cooks and house-girls. The women were good women, easy to please and not hard to satisfy. Sookie was like that. Well, Alice was, too.

And about dinner time Jack got to asking Daniel some questions about Charleston, the Cherokees, his Cherokee wife, his terms as a legislator in Tuscaloosa, and Sookie, which Daniel evaded or turned off. Jack did not mind telling all about how he came to the Warrior Rivers with Alice from the Savannah River in Georgia in one of Tommy Thompson's mule wagons in 1820 and first stopped at the great basin in the fork and was outbid on the basin at the land sales. But Daniel knew all about that anyhow. One man had no secrets and the other one had a whole flock of them.

V

Daniel and Sookie went off to the woods for ginsing that afternoon. Daniel, especially, was not out only for ginsing. He was out to strike Cherokee trails where in his day he had had some rolling times. In fact, anywhere he tolled his hogs from the beech mast or acorns, or followed his cattle through the beggar lice or the red deer over their drives to the canebrakes on the riverbank, or the black bear, he could strike these paths. When he went out and killed a wild turkey eating turkey peas, or cut down a tree for a coon, or caught a red horse in the river, he was apt to strike up with the spirits of spots, the ghosts of particular places, still in their old lodgings even with the Cherokees gone. Most of these presences, he thought, had followed the Cherokees west but some remained. Those who remained kept his religion alive. But there was a wistfulness and a sadness about these that remained not encountered among them in the good old rolling days. Nevertheless, the best that remained hovered over and along these old Indian paths.

That night at Jack Smith's house they had a fine mess of red horses for supper. Daniel and Sookie made the Smiths give way while they prepared the fish and the meal; and the Smiths could not help but enjoy it. They forgot that Daniel and his woman were strollops. While finishing supper Daniel got a fish bone lodged in his throat and couldn't get it out. He tried and tried and followed suggestions, but couldn't make it. The Smiths liked fish as well as the Glazes. Jack had as big a craving for fish in his mouth as Daniel had, but just couldn't take time off to get out and catch them. When he went fishing he had to take off from his work. But Daniel seemed to have no such sacrifices to make in order to get the fish. If Jack had lived right on the river as Daniel did it would have been the same way with him, he declared.

After supper Daniel and the boys were fixing to go to the branch field and catch a coon or two. The coons were eating up the corn. Daniel promised that he would come back over and show them how to catch the last one of them; but in the meantime they would catch one or two and scare the others for awhile. He was also coming back and help them build a wolf pen. Nobody else in the country, he said, knew as well how to catch coons or build wolf pens unless it was Tommy Lisper.

But as they were making preparations to start to the branch field they heard a panther squall. "Listen at that painter," more than one said. "I hear it," more than one replied. Others said, "Yes, it's a painter."

By this time the panther was considerably nearer; in fact, near the house. It was circling and hollering. "It hollers like a woman," Daniel said. Others agreed that it hollered just like a woman. It would jump on a woman if cornered, and it would carry off a child. Woe be unto anything it could seize. Also woe be unto anything it sprung upon. Would the dogs run it? Just then the cur gave his own answer that *he* would. Jack and the grown boys ran out to the stables and by then Bill Glaze's cur had joined Jack's cur and a race was on. Bill Glaze's hound had come over and it joined Jack's hound and together they made a great noise on the trail; but they were afraid and would not *run* it. The panther circled for the Glaze Creek woods and would perhaps go to the river directly across from Daniel's house. Daniel and Sookie halfway decided to get their ginsing and go home. They couldn't carry it all, could they? Yes, they thought so.

While Daniel was out listening and hollering with the boys, the Waldrop boy got a chance alone and told Daniel what Jack Smith said when he saw him coming. Daniel said well, that he was going home anyway and now he certainly would. He found Sookie at the ginsing which she had rounded up and told her that they were going home, that the painter was circling that way. Then he got a chance and asked Jack if he said it. Jack said, "Well, I don't know whether I used exactly them words or not; but I said something like it." Daniel was sorry that he felt that way about it and that was all he said. The ginsing gatherers shouldered their sacks, which bore them down considerably, and lit a shuck after the curs and the panther. All the while Daniel was trying to unlodge the fish bone and Sookie was talking to him about it. He told her what Jack Smith had said. Thank God they could live at home. They didn't have to go see Jack Smith and Alice to get their something to eat.

The panther circled in the Glaze Creek woods a long time and finally struck out for the river at the point directly across from their house. They heard their own dogs join the two curs. They kept to the path, and in spite of a few stops to rest they reached the river as the dogs ran the panther up the river above the field. The dogs were hot in pursuit as they ran over the

spot Daniel guessed to be the bank where his Cherokee wife and their child were buried. Daniel and Sookie reached the graves and lay down to rest, and listened to the dogs, wishing all the while that the dogs would tree or catch the panther. In the moonlight night the long blades of grass, the green moss, deer's tongue, ginsing, ferns, the heartleaves, the plantains, wild hyacinths, and the violet plants which covered the bank and its graves—always in the shade—could be told by shape, feel, and smell.

But the dogs did not tree the panther and could not catch it. Finally they quit the chase and came back by the graves where Daniel and Sookie were. There was one thing Daniel had never told a living soul except his son Daniel. Young Daniel later told it to his boys and they in turn told it to an outsider. When Daniel saw the Cherokee girl and wanted her he had to run her down to catch her. He had to run her all over the place on both sides of the river and at last caught her on the bank where she now lay buried. She was willing to be his and became his on that bank. When their child died, she wanted the family graveyard started there. There was where she wanted to be buried. As Daniel prospered, he came to own all the land on both sides of the river where he had to run down the Cherokee maiden. Across the river from where Daniel and Sookie were lying out Daniel had five good houses. In the bend way up the river which he had bought at the land sales was where he and his young wife spent their honeymoon the next day and night. Ever since that day and night up there with her and nothing to interfere but the hum of the great woods, the sounds of the creatures, and the ripples on the rocks, he had been attached to that particular bend. There was where he had so many untouched ginsing beds.

Daniel would be old before he knew it but was still a very strong man so that he did not at the time mind meeting a black bear or a painter out in the woods. Except for Sookie, he would have been a broken man. As it was, much of the time he was a sad man notwithstanding his natural jovial spirits. But he kept it to himself for the most part. He could sit on his porch at home across the river where the four o'clocks were open and the martins asleep and see the clump of beeches and whiteoaks shading the bank where his Cherokee wife and their child lay. He knew that she died of a broken heart brought on when all her people were forced to go west. At least, he attributed it to that. His daughter and her husband and one of

his boys had gone west to look for their mother's people and had found some of them. He had labored in Tuscaloosa and Cahaba for more than one term in the interest of the Cherokees. More and more he had become embittered in his heart by the thought of the garden variety of life the whites always tried to advance to as he had experienced it in Charleston. He pitied the whites for their religion. It had come to be almost pointless to him. But he hated the hard hearts among them. But some white men like Tommy Lisper had hearts in them and were good to be with. And best of all, Sookie was like the women back in King Solomon's time.

They lay out together all night enjoying the moonlight night and the river, and the bank, and each other's company, and Daniel thought serious thoughts. The fishbone in his throat bothered him some but less than it had, and they decided it would eventually work out without serious consequences. At the first crack of day they pulled off their shoes and waded the river with half of the ginsing. They would come back for the other later. On their way up the hill path to the house they heard the chickens and guineas fly down out of the cedar trees. Daniel complained about the fish bone in his throat as Sookie started a fire from coals still alive deep in the ashes.

When the fire was blazing hot Sookie said, "Here, pull down your breeches and back up close to the fire."

"Why?"

"It makes no difference why. Do like I tell you."

Daniel obeyed.

Sookie got some tallow and warmed it and went to rubbing Daniel. "If it don't do you no good, it won't do you no harm," she said.

Daniel got to laughing and coughed up the fish bone.

And that day they spent a sweet Sunday together.

CHAINS

Elma Godchaux

Lurie Webre often walked along the *batture*. Sometimes he spent more than two hours there weaving in and out among the willows or sometimes just standing still looking at the river. The grass on the levee was burned the color of dry pin-oak leaves. Skinny cows and mules bunched under the shade of the trees, motionless except for their tails swinging at the bugs and horseflies. The willows and cypresses crowded together making good places to hide from the sun. Sometimes Lurie sat on a stump and kicked the pieces of dead wood at his feet to powder and watched the black ants run; the ants were fat as if they all carried eggs. Sometimes Lurie just sat and watched the river. He could see how fast it had fallen since the June rise and it was still falling. He could see the old water line and the grass above it dried and stiff as though water had never covered it. He could see across the river just as easy, the trees strung out along that *batture*. He could see the sugarhouse across the river. Seemed as if the heat brought everything close. The smokestacks and houses and trees across the river looked close enough to touch. Everything was still, like a painted picture. Nothing ever happened. Up above near where the river curved he could see the heavy brick stacks of the nigger prison at Angola. A man could get across easy swimming, Lurie thought; he knew a man could if he let himself go with the current. For a minute he imagined himself runaway. Today there was a cool and gentle mercy in the river. He could feel the water at his armpits and rilling between his toes. He felt the movement of her slow swells

against his body. Under her brown skin dove-like palpitations moved. He got up grinning sheepishly. Some summer, God knows, she might tempt him. He was a fool. He turned his back. And picked his way over the trash of roots and dead leaves and rotted wood. He was very thin; his body seemed shriveled under his shirt and overall. He climbed the levee and stood for a minute on the summit picked out against the hazy blue sky. For the minute he stood there he seemed to stand against the sky. He could see the store gallery filled with men. They were chewing tobacco and jabbering. Every evening after their work was done they sat like that, chewing and jabbering. Lurie raised his head suddenly and marched towards the store. He was thinking fiercely to himself that he wasn't chained. He was as free as any of them. He had as much right as any of them to sit there chewing and jabbering. With his head high and his face flushed the least bit he marched straight to the store.

He walked up and sat on the gallery's lowest step. The talk hushed. He hated the talk hushing like that. But he pushed himself in securely and swept his eyes over the men. He wished the talk would go on. But everybody was quiet. The buzz of insects suddenly rose. A nigger in the store laughed and his laugh came out the door and seemed to poise for a long time on the dull air. The men looked at Lurie and chewed their tobacco hunks slowly and spat out to the road.

Then John Boudreaux cleared his throat and his voice breaking the stillness was like the sudden sound of something solid splashing into dead-quiet water. "Why you don't drain your swamp, Lurie, and raise cane on shares like we all do?"

Lurie answered flushing, "One of these days I'm going to drain it." His voice was heavy and rough.

"You been saying that a long time," Maxie Webre, Lurie's cousin, drawled, "you ought to be doing it soon, Lurie. It ain't natural or right living on stilts up here in the cane country like you was a fisherman down on the Lake front."

"No good's ever going to come of it," Boudreaux put in angrily.

"Sho'."

"Sho' ain't," another man echoed.

"You never do nothing," Maxie continued, "you're sho' one lazy Cajin, Lurie."

The men laughed. Lurie sat forward watching some dust from the road run through his fingers. The laughs hit against his face like slaps, making it burn.

"Lurie's pretty busy on the *batture* most of the time," Paul Morelle joked. "What you got on the *batture,* Lurie? You got a woman hid in the willows down there?"

The men laughed again. "Bet he has," somebody laughed.

"Sho'."

"Come on, Lurie, ain't you?"

"The *batture* ain't nothing to visit alone and you ain't after driftwood for kindling these days."

Lurie tried to laugh too. He ducked his head and giggled. He stood up at last and looked down the road. "I reckon I better be getting home." He hesitated. "Well, so long."

He turned away. The men's eyes followed him. He tried to pretend he didn't feel those eyes on him. He spat in the dust and climbed the levee. It was nobody's business what he did on the *batture*. He spat again. He wished he could sit and jabber.

In front of him the sun was swollen and red. The waters of the river seemed to burn. The cane leaves glinted brazenly. A couple of cows passed waddling with their bags full and they shone under the heavy red hand of the sun. Niggers too slouching along. Not a breath stirred the suspended glow. Children dribbled from the houses along the way onto the steps and the yards. Lurie wiped the sweat from his face and opposite his own house turned and went slantways down the levee with his body stiffened, holding back against the stiff run of the slope. He could see all about him the spread of Mr. Labidet's cane. He stepped on to the raised plank walk that led to his door. Beneath him and all about the house was an island of swamp ground covered with wild hyacinths. The swamp seemed to take the little man and swallow him. The hyacinths bunched tightly and made what looked like solid ground of green. Here and there the sharp points of iris leaves pierced. Walking above it Lurie could see the earth between the leaves was caking in the dry heat. Bad weather for sugarcane, Lurie

thought; summers ought to be hot but wet. A couple of turkey-buzzards and then more dropped down behind Lurie's house. Lurie could hear them flop down on to the ground after something dead in the leaves, a rabbit or a field rat. He looked about him. His sunken ground was always the first thing to fall away into darkness. A black hand seemed to press down on the swamp and on him too. The heaviness clamped down on his heart. It made a wall round him smooth and black. He couldn't see the house next door where Dena Larue lived; he lost the stretch of cane; he couldn't see nothing. He moved impatiently hurrying along the walk. The swamp wasn't nothing to chain a man down. He went on into the house and over the uncovered passageway to the shed where he did his cooking. He sat down at the table with a plate of cold grits and bacon. He never took much time cooking. He bent low over his plate, but not paying attention to the food, thinking. He imagined how his swamp would look covered with cane. His cane would spread evenly, continuing the rows of the other men. Nobody but himself and Hypolite Larue and Mr. Labidet would know where his fields ended and where Larue's and Mr. Labidet's took up. But he felt the iron chain of the swamp round his neck was unbreakable. He ate quickly, shoveling up the grits in big spoonfuls. A mosquito-hawk flew into the room and was whirring and bumping against the window sill. The heat hugged the shed, filling the room with a motionless pressure. Sweat dyed the shirt Lurie wore and ran down his cheeks. When he was finished eating he moved over to the sink and washed his plate and a couple of pots. Then he took up the bucket of kitchen slop and walked out the door with it, going across the swamp.

The big moon was faint in a sky still lit by the sunken sun. Lurie saw two niggers standing on the levee. They disappeared suddenly going down the slope to the *batture*. At night the niggers hid among the trees on the *batture* and made love. White folks too. Lurie's heart swung heavily. He threw the slop from his bucket into the pen for Tony Cascio's pigs. The pigs came running and grunted, gobbling the stuff. Lurie moved away, returning the way he had come across the swamp. His feet rattled the dry leaves and raised the dust. Darkness was like a contagion spreading from the swamp. But the moon had brightened and taken firmness and shape. It seemed to swing very low just above Dena's gate. And as Lurie looked,

Dena was standing there lit from head to foot. He could see the lines of her body emphasized by the light from the moon. He stopped. And put his bucket down. She stood there enormous and spotlighted as if she were raised on a stage with the world about her falling away in darkness. Lurie's mouth hung open. Silence humming with insects suspended between them. Then while he stood she turned and saw him.

Her full voice swung out to him across the swamp. "Hello, Lurie. I come out, me, to see if I can't get a breath of air." He stood stupidly catching the sound of her voice and watching her. "You ain't bogged in the hyacinths, are you," she laughed.

He moved towards her, dragging his feet and wiping his hands off inside his pockets.

"Our sheet-iron roof makes our house hot as a oven," she continued.

He could see her firm breasts move as she breathed and her breath pushed against his cheeks. He stood before her, not speaking.

He made her feel uncomfortable, not saying a word, "Well, Lurie." She cleared her throat. "Ain't you begun draining yet?" She was always teasing him.

He looked at her earnestly. "No, but it's easy enough to drain. All you have to do is fill in a little and cut quarter drains the same as you do sugar land."

"Whyn't you do it?"

"I'm going to do it."

"I reckon it costs money."

"Oh not much," he assured her in his masculine voice.

"You're always talking about draining," she said, "but you never do nothing."

"After this grinding," he interrupted quickly, "I'm going to do something." His thin serious face thrust towards her, very white, washed with sweat. But her head was raised. He couldn't see her eyes. She looked at something beyond him. He wanted to reach her.

Then above his head her voice suddenly belled, "Oh hello."

Lurie jumped. A hand fell on his shoulder and Maxie's voice sounded close to his ear. "Well, if it ain't little Lurie." The blood burned Lurie's face. "What you all jabbering about?"

"Lurie's swamp," Dena explained.

Lurie coughed.

"Speaking of draining, hunh," Maxie asked with laughs in his voice.

"I'm going to drain," Lurie cried.

"You got to fill in plenty," Maxie observed. "Well," he broke off, 'come on, Dena."

They moved off together quickly, the darkness mingling their two igures.

Then Dena called back, "So long, Lurie."

Lurie swallowed. "So long."

He heard them in the dry grass going up the levee. He felt hollow, ike an old man. He licked his thin lips. Maxie thought he knew every-hing. He made Dena think it too. Lurie knew there were lots of secret hings nobody knew, neither Maxie or Boudreaux. Lurie's feet dragged long the walk. He couldn't make headway against the darkness. It was ike Dena's presence so full of life it pushed aside his own. He felt help-ess. There was something everlasting about these things, as everlasting as this swamp that had always been, a dark interruption in the even sweep of the cane. When the hyacinths bloomed, the pale flowers did not erase he desolation that hovered over the sunken ground. When Lurie was a child he used to give the place a wide berth. But now it had caught him. The swamp was his. His father had left it to him. Sometimes he got to hinking he was the swamp's. He ducked his head entering his doorway. A big deer's antler was nailed above it. He wished folks could have heard he strong bang of his gun that had dropped the deer. Sometimes little men did big things. Dena and Maxie were on the *batture*. Maxie carried Dena off easy. Maxie was always doing something, talking at the store or mak-ng grinding at Labidet's sugarhouse or working his own fields, plow-ng or planting or laying by. He kept busy all the time. Lurie pouted and thought of himself and his father, who had bought this swamp off a nigger and was going to plant the low ground in rice and hadn't ever done it.

Lurie didn't light the lamp on the table. He dragged his cot from the hot wall between the two doors where there might be a draft. He got into bed naked and drew the sheet over him. He squashed a mosquito on his forehead. The voice of Tony Cascio's wife came to him faintly. It was far

away. He closed his eyes. He held Dena's hand. A pulse beat in her hand; it beat like a bird's excited heart. Big blobs of sweat stood up on his pale forehead and his body lying irreguarly on the bed with the sheet thrown back looked as if it had been hurled down furiously. But he slept with his lips spread in a smile.

In summers Lurie never had anything much to do. The sugarhouse was closed and Lurie had plenty of time to think. He fed Tony Cascio's shoats and did odd jobs for the dago. But he had plenty of time on his hands. He walked along the top of the levee now with his hands in his pockets, thinking. It was after midday and a hard glare was settled down on the land. The fat sides of the levee looked white. Dust mingled with the bright haze and covered everything, houses, fence rails, cane leaves. The dust's hot dry taste was always in Lurie's mouth. He could feel the sweat running down inside his loose shirt and trousers. Tony Cascio was in his yard hitching his horse. His littlest kid sat on the step hugging a coon. The Cascios kept all kinds of animals. Their yard was all cluttered up with chickens and a couple of goats and pigs. Lurie passed a couple of niggers sitting below him on the fence beside the road doing nothing. They looked calm and comfortable. Niggers were like that; they didn't like to worry. Lurie liked niggers. Before he came to the store he ducked down the levee. He wound in and out among the trees until he stood beside the river. He stood with his legs spread watching it. He watched steadfastly. His eyes went up and down it. It lapped lazily at his feet, winding slowly past the solid walls of Angola prison and past all the places Lurie knew. He sat down at last on a cypress stump, took out his pocket knife, and began whittling a stick. He wished he could do something. He didn't like to whittle all day. He looked at the river seeking something; he didn't know what. Sometimes he shook his head. Sometimes he spat as if getting ready to say something. One night, he thought, he ought to come out and take a bath in the river naked. It would be heathen to do that he knew. But he bet it would be nice, the heavy cool water wrapping round him. He stopped whittling and with his elbows on his knees squinted out over the river. He wished it would take him away. When he heard somebody walking on the levee he lifted his head and listened. He didn't want anybody to see him. He ought not to be sitting by himself like this doing nothing but whit-

tling and studying. He kept thinking he had to have considerable money to drain his swamp. He knew he was a good man in the sugarhouse grinding; he was worth some money to Mr. Labidet. But Mr. Labidet said money didn't grow on the trees. That was exactly what Mr. Labidet had said. Lurie remembered every word. Mr. Labidet was painting his mule stable and Lurie found him in the mule yard. Some niggers were on ladders and with their arms spread painting the wall they looked as if they were stretched on crosses. Lurie remembered the manure pile in the yard and the flies swarming above it. Lurie had coughed and wiped the sweat off his face and watched Mr. Labidet and not known how to begin. He coughed again and stumbled over his words. He wanted to raise cane on shares like the other men did. If his wages were a little higher he could drain his swamp. Could Mr. Labidet raise him? He was a good man at the centrifugals. Would Mr. Labidet raise him? "But, Lurie," Mr. Labidet said, "money don't grow on trees. Don't you know we don't need any more land in cane? Raising cane in Louisiana is too expensive. You men don't use your heads. That's why you all never get on. Money don't grow on the trees." That's why Lurie didn't get on. Money didn't grow on trees. The river lapped at Lurie's feet. Money don't grow on trees. Leaves are on the trees. Not money, Lurie. God, he wished the river would hush. When he had left Labidet's mule stable he had passed Boudreaux's house where by the gate a white rag was tied on a pole stuck into the roadside. Zillah Boudreaux was going to have a baby and the white rag was the signal for the doctor. That flag, Lurie felt, was the sign of John Boudreaux's manhood. It would never fly for him. He couldn't do nothing. He hung round all summer and fed the dago's pigs and sat whittling by the river like a nigger. He felt hollow, emptied of manhood. His heart swung in the empty cavity of his body. No, the flag would never fly for him. But it would for Dena. And in the hot weather Dena would sit in the open doorway nursing her baby. When the baby was full she would spread her knees and lay it across her lap. When it fretted she would pat it and nestle it at her breast again, and Lurie would hear the little thing sucking. It finished and Dena bent over the child before her dress was hooked and her full white breast hung loose for the minute she bent and tended to it. Lurie felt filled with his feelings. Blood throbbed in his head and cheeks. He was a good man at the

centrifugals; he knew he was. Mr. Labidet forgot. He only remembered money didn't grow on . . . Oh shut up about that. A man at the centrifugals had to be strong to shove the door against the heavy flow of the sugar, Lurie didn't look strong. But he was. Nobody could see his strength. The hot sugar was browner than the river and moved faster. The river moved so slowly you had to watch it before you noticed its motion. Then you saw it sliding away. Lurie felt himself going with it, slipping by all the things he knew surrounded by the broad sheet of its protection. He sat for a long time leaning on his elbows, holding the knife and the whittled stick and feeling the water's cool stroking. He didn't know what time it was. The mosquitoes were right bad. Cows were moving by him up the levee. He felt his empty stomach. But he wasn't lonesome. He grinned; he was lazy as a nigger. Then he heard noises, a horse galloping and some men's voices calling out. He got up. And listened. Then wove his way quickly through the litter of leaves and wood and dung to the levee top. He saw a commotion of horses and people before the store. He hurried down the levee and along the road.

Niggers were standing on the edges of the crowd staring and listening. A nigger on the gallery was leaning on a broom with his eyes big. John Boudreaux stood on the top step. Lurie saw Maxie and men from a good distance away in the crowd. Little Lurie pushed himself among them and got as near the gallery as he could. Nobody noticed him. Folks looked over his head gesturing and talking.

Boudreaux spat a swift jet of tobacco juice past Lurie to the road and wiped his mouth. "You all with horses get started now," he called; "I'll meet you later on with what dogs I can get."

"I thought you said the prison man brought down dogs," Maxie called from the road.

"I did say so," Boudreaux answered, "but it ain't going to hurt how many dogs we got."

The niggers' eyes were spreading; they were white; they looked like big marbles. Lurie listened.

"Sho' it ain't going to hurt," Maxie shot back to Boudreaux.

"Sho' not," men echoed.

Lurie cleared his throat to speak. But Boudreaux's voice drowned out everything. "The prison man said he was going to lay back on the edge of the woods near the drainage machine. He's there now I reckon waiting for what men he can get. The nigger's bound to come out the woods sooner or later likely near the drainage machine where he might think he could get in touch with some other nigger."

"Sho'."

"Huh-hunh."

"What," stammered Lurie, "what's wrong?"

Maxie grabbed his gaze away.

Lurie tried a nigger standing near him. "What, what's the matter?"

The nigger made as if he didn't hear the question; he listened to the talk swinging back and forth.

"They sho' he's in the woods back yonder," somebody asked.

"Sho'. The dogs smelled him."

"If we all know how to hunt," explained Boudreaux, "we can round him out at the drainage machine where the guard is waiting."

"Sho'."

"It'll be easy."

Lurie pushed up the gallery steps to the nigger with the broom; he knew the nigger. "What's the matter? What's wrong," he pressed.

"Nigger murderer run off from Angola," the nigger whispered, "he in the woods back yonder." The big white eyes slid away to Maxie who was talking.

"Dust'll muffle the horses' hoofs. That nigger ain't going to know nothing until we got the handcuffs on him."

"Sho' ain't."

Laughs broke out. The men moved.

"How much'd you say the reward was?"

"Twenty-five dollars. Twenty-five dollars is plenty enough for a nigger."

"Sho'."

"Sho'. That's enough."

Lurie's eyes were big.

A couple of horses started from the crowd and the men turned in their saddles. "So long."

"So long."

Dust flew up making a thick screen for the riders.

"I'm getting on home so I can get ready," Maxie announced, "I wouldn't miss it, me, for nothing, hunting a nigger with dogs. I don't care so much for the reward as hunting the nigger."

"I reckon I'll be there," Lurie said suddenly. The words choked him. But he had to say them. This was his chance. He had to go. Maybe he'd catch the nigger.

Maxie who was moving off stopped and grinned. Chuckles rippled over the gallery and on to the road. Lurie dipped his head. "Whyn't you look for the nigger in your own swamp, Lurie?"

"Oh Lord," sputtered somebody.

"Yes, why don't you?"

Even the niggers grinned.

"I've hunted before this," Lurie announced in that stubborn voice of his, "none of you all ain't hunted more than me."

"You ought to know that hunting bear and deer or rabbit is different from hunting nigger," asserted Maxie.

"Sho'," everybody agreed, "that's so."

"Reckon, me, I can make out with a nigger same as the rest," Lurie argued.

"Oh you ain't got no horse, Lurie."

"No. How you going without a horse?"

"Sho'. You can't go."

Lurie seemed to wilt. His head hung. He wiped his face.

"Well," Boudreaux began, "we all better be getting started. The nigger ain't going to sit round waiting."

The crowd began to spread out and thin. A few of the men made new groups and huddled together talking. A man on horseback turned and laughed towards Lurie.

Lurie walked off. He could hear the talk going on behind his back. He wished he could catch the nigger. God, he wished he could. Twenty-five dollars was a good lot of money. He'd start right off draining. He'd march

the nigger to the store. He reckoned they would run a column about it in the parish paper. "Lurie Webre Catches Nigger Murderer," it would say, and in smaller letters, "without a horse Lurie brings in big buck nigger that murdered several nigger field hands." God. If he only could. But nobody could get back behind to the drainage machine without a horse. He could see the men standing round listening to the way he had caught the nigger; Maxie and Boudreaux were there. Little men could do big things. Maybe he could borrow Tony's horse. The dago never bothered much with what was going on. Lurie hurried. He didn't intend to meet the other men. He was going off alone. A whole bunch of horses would be bound to make some noise. He stopped at Tony's gate. He put his hand on the latch. He stopped dead staring. Tony was under a chinaberry tree settling the saddle on his horse. The scene etched itself sharply on Lurie's sight. He would never forget it. It burned into him like a sharp tragedy, a killing being enacted before his eyes, Tony's kids standing round watching, the littlest one still hugging the coon, and Tony himself reaching for the saddle girth under the horse's belly and tightening it so that he jerked the horse up with the strap. Tony swung himself to the horse's back and came towards Lurie. Lurie didn't move. He stood watching the horse and rider, spellbound, as if he expected something extraordinary to happen. But nothing did. Cascio called out as he went by. Lurie licked his dry lips and sank down on the side of the levee.

A group of horsemen loped by him, a strong army of horses and men. He didn't raise his head; he stared between his legs at the grass. He wasn't thinking. He was just sitting there lost. Sometimes he raised his hand and slapped at the mosquitoes and a horsefly that kept buzzing about his head. When he looked up he saw the dust settled like a thick scum on the hyacinth leaves. He didn't move. He was chained. Then Dena came out and stood in her yard looking at him. So he got up and started home.

She called to him. "Hello, Lurie. Ain't you going on the hunt?"

"I don't reckon so," he answered, "I been away on business and I ain't ate all day."

He could hardly see her. A mist swung between his eyes and her. A wagon jolted by and the wagon's noise got between him and Dena. He kept fighting to hold her and his senses kept losing her.

"I wonder who's going to catch the nigger," she was saying, "I reckon Maxie will."

Bright strips of color stretched across the sky where the sun was sinking.

"I'm right scared of the nigger," Dena went on; "a nigger murderer, you can't tell what they'll do."

"He ain't going to do nothing," Lurie said in his slow rough voice; "there ain't nothing to be scared of."

"Well, it's sho' scary," Dena insisted, "with all the men away."

Lurie cleared his throat. "It ain't a bit. Likely the nigger ain't as bad as he sounds."

"Anyway I don't feel safe," she asserted, "with him around. I sho' hope Maxie catches him." She paused and swung at the mosquitoes. "The mosquitoes are eating me up and I reckon you're tired and hongry if you been away all day so I'll say goodnight. Goodnight."

"Goodnight."

He moved away. Then stopped and called. "You don't have to be scared of nothing, Dena."

She was gone into the house.

He kept on across the swamp. Beyond the gloomy hollow of his ground there were house lights, Tony Cascio's chickens settled in the chinaberry trees making dark lumps along the branches. A dog barked and a couple of the chicken lumps moved, spreading their wings. Then everything settled again into quietness and that steady buzzing that seemed only the voice of quietness. A big moon was swinging over the levee. Lurie felt the heat coming out of the ground. He was dead-tired.

He lit the lamp and pulled out the bed, went to the kitchen shed and drank a glass of milk. He brought a loaf of bread back to the bedroom and chewed on it while he undressed. Moths and bugs flew about the light. Sometimes a creature landed on the strip of fly-paper hanging from the ceiling. Lurie sat down on the bed, took off his shoes and scratched his toes. He stopped. Listened. His toes stiffened. He stood up listening. Something rustled the hyacinth leaves. He moved to the door. Darkness stretched everywhere and silence. He tried to puncture the darkness and the stillness. Lightning-bugs kept rising and falling and things kept humming. Lurie

pushed his head into the darkness. Then he turned from the door, thinking some animal had been hunting in the leaves. He blew out the light and got into bed. He closed his eyes. He might as well sleep. He couldn't do nothing. He kept his eyes shut. He wished his world would slide away. He wished the river would carry him off. God, he wished he could skim away. He wished he wasn't chained. Wished he was sitting at the store, spitting and swapping talk. Wished he could bring the nigger back. God, he wished he could. His closed eyes saw Dena's light go out. He moved. He hoped she wasn't scared. He wished he could shoot the nigger. He heard his gun go off. He wished the men could hear. He wished he could scream so they could hear. He screamed. He screamed again. He felt the agony of the scream constricting his throat. Then the pain eased off him and he was dropping into the nothingness of dreamless sleep. A fly landed on his face. But he didn't know it. Then suddenly he felt himself swing plummet on the string of a noise. The next minute he was awake. He sat up. He was icy cold. He stared and listened. He couldn't hear a thing, just the frogs and crickets singing. His sweat was cold. He heard the noise. It sounded like feet thumping on to the ground from the height of, say, a fence. It came, faint, from Tony Cascio's pig pen. Lurie heard it just there. Then it dropped away into stillness. He slipped out of bed. Put his pants on. No lights showed anywhere. He got his gun from the shelf; he had to stand on a chair to reach it. He stuffed the cartridges into his pocket and crept out the doorway.

The moon had slid down behind the levee. Lurie cut through the swamp towards Cascio's pig pen, picking his steps so they wouldn't rattle the leaves and loading his gun. He made for the big hackberry tree standing on the edge of the swamp. He peeped round it at the pen. Everywhere quiet. The stillness stretched over the pen where the two old sows were lying against the fence asleep and the boar was nosing some slop. Lurie kept staring into the thin darkness. Earth was quiet as the broad dim arch of sky. Lurie could hear himself breathing. Then he lowered his gun and grinned. He was glad nobody saw him like this, foolishly searching the darkness. He tried to hide his gun behind him as he tiptoed away. He spat, a little sick. He was a fool.

Night was passing into day. The moon was fading out. An old white mule was standing on the levee. It took no notice of Lurie. Lurie went on

down the levee to the *batture*. He went slowly with his head hanging thinking he was a fool. He reckoned he'd been dreaming about a noise and there wasn't no noise really. He was nearly to his stump when he knew somebody was watching him. The nigger was sitting with his knees drawn up and his back against the stump. He must have just waked. Lurie raised the gun. And the nigger's eyes were big looking right into the barrel. His mouth hung down.

Whispers came from him. "Don't shoot, don't shoot, boss."

Lurie kept the gun pointing and his heart kept beating, choking him with thanks. Moss and twigs were stuck in the nigger's wool and his face was marked with welts and clotted blood.

"Get up," commanded Lurie, "and you make a try to escape, I'll shoot you where you stand."

"Yes sir." The nigger got up stiffly.

He was a big nigger. His hands hanging by his sides looked swollen. He was almost naked. But Lurie could see part of his pants clinging to him were convict-striped. Lurie trembled. He coughed, choking a little. "How'd you get here, nigger?"

"On the river, boss."

Lurie stared at the nigger unbelieving. Then his eyes went to the river and his heart kept praising Jesus. The river was unchaining him like he knew it could. It was as if it were taking him away. Its gentle touch pushed him on. He caught himself up. He was the same old fool. He was arresting the nigger murderer; he ought to remember that. Folks would be stirring soon. He wanted to wait until folks were in their yards feeding their animals and the men began to straggle back from the woods. He was going to keep the nigger just in front of the gun when he marched him to the store. But nobody was stirring yet. He had to kill time.

"How'd you get here on the *batture*, nigger? I thought you was back yonder in the woods." God, Lurie thought, he was a big nigger. Folks wouldn't know how Lurie had caught such a big one.

"I ain't never been in the woods," the nigger was saying, "I know the woods is the first place they hunts a man. I been in that swamp yonder. I knows folks steers clear of a big old swamp like that one yonder." The

nigger pouted. He watched the gun. "I was hunting something to eat and resting up," he went on mournfully, "before I took to the river again."

"Wasn't you scared of that swamp," Lurie asked, killing time.

"No, boss," the nigger answered, "I ain't scared of no swamp. I ain't scared of nothing 'cept a gun."

Lurie steadied the gun.

"It was sho' nice on the river," the nigger went on in his slow mournful voice, remembering. "I floated down on sticks and truck. Reckon I was going to be in New Orleans soon. But I got hongry." His voice fell and died. Then he began again, "the river sho' was nice lifting me up by the arms and legs. I felt safe like I was in my mamma's lap. It was cool too. When my head got hot I dove it under the water and the river kept toting me away from trouble."

The nigger's voice was low. Lurie could hardly hear it. But he bet he knew how nice the river felt. Seemed as if he instead of the nigger was floating away. He felt the water soft against him. It had touched the nigger like that. Lurie knew he would kill the man who recalled him from so cool an escape. He felt how his heart would swing a dead weight in his chest while he shot to kill. But the nigger didn't try to harm him. The nigger's heart must be heavy. He stood there studying the river, thinking yesterday he had floated down. He looked like he was about to cry. It was getting late. Lurie had to march him to the store.

"Come on, nigger," ordered Lurie, "time to get started. March straight ahead."

The nigger turned in front of Lurie. They started off. The nigger went slowly dragging his feet. Lurie kept close to the nigger pointing his gun. They twisted round the trees. A horse loped by on the levee. It struck its hoofs sharply on the path. Lurie looked up. The man on its back was a heavy lump joggled by the horse's motion. Lurie stared. The lump looked sodden, without feelings. Lurie knew he wasn't jerked up and down without will. He was different from that thing on horseback. He moved by himself. He was free. He did what he wanted. He didn't have to listen to every black lump on horseback. He had a mind of his own. That lump was Boudreaux or Maxie. Lurie felt choked. He was full of a burning assurance.

"Wait a minute, nigger."

The nigger turned. Lurie looked at him. The nigger was his nigger. Nobody couldn't tell him what to do with his nigger. He was a big nigger too.

"Go on," Lurie cried suddenly, "go on, nigger, get in the river."

The nigger stared.

"Go on," Lurie repeated, "get in." He was going to unchain the big nigger. The nigger was going to float away. After the dry yard of Angola prison the river felt cool, Lurie bet. Lurie did what he wanted to do. He was a free man, thank God.

"Don't you hear me, nigger," he cried; "get in the river."

The nigger didn't move. He stared. His eyes bulged; they looked like beads sewed in a doll's head.

"You ain't deaf, are you, nigger? Go on."

The nigger dropped on his knees. "Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, boss, you going to kill me. You going to kill me when my head is bobbing on the water. Lord Jesus, boss. Please."

"Get in." Lurie shoved the nigger with the gun. "Get in the water, you. Make haste. Folks going to see you. Get in, I tell you. Get in."

The nigger fell on the ground. Lurie pushed him with the muzzle of the gun. The nigger rolled over, over leaves and twigs and dung, bruising himself against stumps. The gun kept nudging him. Over and over. He splashed into the water. He kept his head under.

Lurie could see the waves running above the nigger's body where he was swimming under water. When he came up for air he was far out, nearly in the middle of the stream. Lurie waved. He watched until he couldn't see the nigger any longer. He turned away slowly—he was smiling—and hunted in the bushes for a place to hide his gun. He stuck it under some branches and covered it with leaves. He didn't want folks joking him for carrying a gun. He patted the branches into place over it. When he walked up the levee he was still smiling and his heart kept beating thanks. He went slowly, a little man looking shriveled under his loose clothes. He carried his head hanging in his usual way. But he didn't feel the same. When men on horseback passed him he raised his head. He was as free as any of them.

WHEN THE LIGHT GETS GREEN

Robert Penn Warren

My grandfather had a long white beard and sat under the cedar tree. The beard, as a matter of fact, was not very long and not white, only gray, but when I was a child and was away from him at school during the winter, I would think of him, not seeing him in my mind's eye, and say, he has a long white beard. Therefore it was a shock to me, on the first morning back home, to watch him lean over the dresser toward the wavy green mirror, which in his always shadowy room reflected things like deep water riffled by a little wind, and clip his gray beard to a point. It is gray and pointed, I would say then, remembering what I had thought before.

He turned his face to the green wavy glass, first one side and then the other in quarter profile, and lifted the long shears, which trembled a little, up to cut the beard. His face being turned like that, with his good nose and pointed gray beard, he looked like General Robert E. Lee without any white horse to ride. My grandfather had been a soldier too, but now he wore blue-jean pants and when he leaned over like that toward the mirror I couldn't help but notice how small his hips and backsides were. Only they weren't just small, they were shrunken. I noticed how the blue jeans hung loose from his suspenders and loose off his legs and down around his shoes. And in the morning when I noticed all this about his legs and backsides, I felt a tight feeling in my stomach like when you walk behind a woman and see the high heel of her shoe is worn and twisted and jerks her ankle every time she takes a step.

Always before my grandfather had finished clipping his beard, my Uncle Kirby came to the door and beat on it for breakfast. "I'll be down in just a minute, thank you sir," my grandfather said. My uncle called him Mr. Barden. "Mr. Barden, breakfast is ready." It was because my Uncle Kirby was not my real uncle, having married my Aunt Lucy, who lived with my grandfather. Then my grandfather put on a black vest and put his gold watch and chain in the vest and picked up his cob pipe from the marble dresser top, and he and I went down to breakfast, after Uncle Kirby was already downstairs.

When we came into the dining room, Aunt Lucy was sitting at the foot of the table with the iron coffee pot on a plate beside her. She said, "Good morning, Papa."

"Good morning, Lucy," he said, and sat down at the head of the table, taking one more big puff off his pipe before laying it beside his plate.

"You've brought that old pipe down to breakfast again," my aunt said, while she poured the bright-looking coffee into the cups.

"Don't it stink," he always said.

My uncle never talked at breakfast, but when my grandfather said that, my uncle always opened his long lips to grin like a dog panting, and showed his hooked teeth. His teeth were yellow because he chewed tobacco, which my grandfather didn't do, although his beard was yellow around the mouth from smoking. Aunt Lucy didn't like my uncle to chew, that was the whole trouble. So she rode my grandfather for bringing his pipe down, all in fun at first before she got serious about it. But he always brought it down just the same, and said to her, "Don't it stink."

After we ate, my uncle got up, and said, "I got to get going," and went out through the kitchen where the cook was knocking and sloshing around. If it had rained right and was a good tobacco-setting season, my grandfather went off with me down to the stable to get his mare, for he had to see the setting. We saddled up the mare and went across the lot, where limestone bunched out of the ground and cedar trees and blue grass grew out of the split rock. A branch of cold water with minnows in it went through the lot between the rocks and under the cedar trees; it was where I used to play before I got big enough to go to the river with the niggers to swim.

My grandfather rode across the lot and over the rise back of the house. He sat up pretty straight for an old man, holding the bridle in his left hand, and in his right hand a long hickory tobacco stick whittled down to make a walking cane. I walked behind him, and watched the big straw hat he wore waggle a little above his narrow neck, or how he held the stick in the middle, firm and straight up like something carried in a parade, or how smooth and slow the muscles in the mare's flanks worked as she put each hoof down on the ground going up the hill. Sassafras bushes and blackberry bushes grew thick along the lane over the rise. In summer tufts of hay would catch and hang on the dry bushes, and showed that the hay wagons had been that way; but when we went that way in setting time, just after breakfast, the blackberry blooms were hardly gone, only a few rusty patches of white left, and the sassafras leaves showed still wet with dew or maybe the rain.

From the rise we could look back on the house. The shingles were black with damp, and the whitewash grayish, except in spots where the sun already struck it and it was drying. The tops of the cedar trees, too, were below us, very dark green and quiet. When we crossed the rise, there were the fields going down toward the river, all checked off and ready for setting, very even, only for the gullies where brush was piled to stop the washing. The fields were reddish from the wet, not yet steaming. Across them, the green woods and the sycamores showing white far off told where the river was.

The hands were standing at the edge of the field under the trees when we got there. The little niggers were filling their baskets with the wet plants to drop, and I got me a basket and filled it. My Uncle Kirby gave me fifty cents for dropping plants, but he didn't give the little niggers that much, I remember. The hands and the women stood around waiting a minute, watching Uncle Kirby, who always fumed around, waving his dibble, his blue shirt already sticking to his arms with sweat. "Get the lead out," he said. The little niggers filled faster, grinning with their teeth at him. "Goddam, get the lead out!" My grandfather sat on his mare under the trees, still holding the walking cane, and said, "Why don't you start em, sir?"

Then, of a sudden, they all moved out into the field, scattering out down the rows, the droppers first, and after a minute the setters, who lurched along, never straightening up, down the rows toward the river. I walked down my row, separating out the plants and dropping them at the hills, while it got hotter and the ground steamed. The sun broke out now and then, making my shadow on the ground, then the cloud would come again, and I could see its shadow on the red field drifting at me.

My grandfather rode very slow along the edge of the field to watch the setting, or stayed still under the trees. After a while, maybe about ten o'clock, he would leave and go home. I could see him riding the mare up the rise and then go over the rise; or if I was working the other way toward the river, when I turned round at the end, the lane would be empty and nothing on top the rise, with the cloudy blue-gray sky low behind it.

The tobacco was all he cared about, now we didn't have any horses that were any real good. He had some silver cups, only one real silver one though, that his horses won at fairs, but all that was before I was born. The real silver one, the one he kept on his dresser and kept string and old minnie balls and pins and things in, had *1859* on it because his horse won it then before the War, when he was a young man. Uncle Kirby said horses were foolishness, and grandfather said, yes, he reckoned horses were foolishness all right. So what he cared about now was the tobacco. One time he was a tobacco-buyer for three years, but after he bought a lot of tobacco and had it in his sheds, the sheds burned up on him. He didn't have enough insurance to do any good and he was a ruined man. After that all his children, he had all girls and his money was gone, said about him, "Papa's just visionary, he tried to be a tobacco-buyer but he's too visionary and not practical." But he always said, "All tobacco-buyers are sons-of-bitches, and three years is enough of a man's life for him to be a son-of-a-bitch, I reckon." Now he was old, the corn could get the rust or the hay get rained on for all he cared, it was Uncle Kirby's worry, but all summer off and on he had to go down to the tobacco field to watch them sucker or plow or worm, and sometimes he pulled a few suckers himself. And when a cloud would blow up black in summer, he got nervous as a cat, not knowing whether it was the rain they needed or maybe a hail storm coming that would cut the tobacco up bad.

Mornings he didn't go down to the field he went out under the cedar tree where his chair was. Most of the time he took a book with him along with his pipe, for he was an inveterate reader. His being an inveterate reader was one of the things made his children say he was visionary. He read a lot until his eyes went bad the summer before he had his stroke, then after that, I read to him some, but not as much as I ought. He used to read out loud some from Macaulay's *History of England* or Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*: about Flodden Field or about how the Janizaries took Constantinople amid great slaughter and how the Turk surveyed the carnage and quoted from the Persian poet about the lizard keeping the courts of the mighty. My grandfather knew some poetry too, and he said it to himself when he didn't have anything else to do. I lay on my back on the ground, feeling the grass cool and tickly on the back of my neck, and looked upside down into the cedar tree where the limbs were tangled and black-green like big hairy fern fronds with the sky blue all around, while he said some poetry. Like the "Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece, where burning Sappho loved and sung"; or like "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll."

But he never read poetry, he just said what he already knew. He only read history and *Napoleon and his Marshals,* having been a soldier and fought in the War himself. He rode off and joined the cavalry, but he never told me whether he took the horse that won the real silver cup or not. He was with Forrest before Forrest was a general. He said Forrest was a great general, and if they had done what Forrest wanted and cleaned the country ahead of the Yankees, like the Russians beat Napoleon, they'd whipped the Yankees sure. He told me about Fort Donelson, how they fought in the winter woods, and how they got away with Forrest at night, splashing through the cold water. And how the dead men looked in the river bottoms in winter, and I lay on my back on the grass, looking up in the thick cedar limbs, and thought how it was to be dead.

After Shiloh was fought and they pushed the Yankees down in the river, my grandfather was a captain, for he raised a cavalry company of his own out of West Tennessee. He was a captain, but he never got promoted after the War; when I was a little boy everybody still called him Captain Barden, though they called lots of other people in our section Colonel and Major.

One time I said to him: "Grandpa, did you ever kill any Yankees?" He said: "God-er-mighty, how do I know?" So, being little, I thought he was just a captain because he never killed anybody; and I was ashamed. He talked about Fort Pillow, and the drunk niggers under the bluff. And one time he said niggers couldn't stand a charge or stand the cold steel, so I thought maybe he killed some of them. But then I thought, niggers don't count, maybe.

He only talked much in the morning. Almost every afternoon right after dinner, he went to sleep in his chair, with his hands curled up in his lap, one of them holding the pipe that still sent up a little smoke in the shadow, and his head propped back on the tree trunk. His mouth hung open, and under the hairs of his mustache, all yellow with nicotine, you could see his black teeth and his lips that were wet and pink like a baby's. Usually I remember him that way, asleep.

I remember him that way, or else trampling up and down the front porch, nervous as a cat, while a cloud blew up and the trees began to rustle. He tapped his walking cane on the boards and whistled through his teeth with his breath and kept looking off at the sky where the cloud and sometimes the lightning was. Then of a sudden it came, and if it was rain he used to go up to his room and lie down; but if it came hail on the tobacco, he stayed on the front porch, not trampling any more, and watched the hail rattle off the roof and bounce soft on the grass. "God-er-mighty," he always said, "bigger'n minnie balls"; even when it wasn't so big.

In 1914, just before the War began, it was a hot summer with the tobacco mighty good but needing rain. And when the dry spell broke and a cloud blew up, my grandfather came out on the front porch, watching it like that. It was mighty still, with lightning way off, so far you couldn't hardly hear the thunder. Then the leaves began to ruffle like they do when the light gets green, and my grandfather said to me, "Son, it's gonna hail." And he stood still. Down in the pasture, little that far off, you could see the cattle bunching up and the white horse charging across the pasture, looking bright, for the sun was shining bright before the cloud struck it all at once. "It's gonna hail," my grandfather said. It was dark, with jagged lightning and the thunder high and steady. And there the hail was.

He just turned around and went in the house. I watched the hail bouncing, then I heard a noise and my aunt yelled. I ran back in the dining room where the noise was, and my grandfather was lying on the floor with the old silver pitcher he dropped and dented and the glass he had started to drink out of broken. We tried to drag him, but he was too heavy, then my Uncle Kirby came up wet from the stable, so we carried my grandfather upstairs and put him on his bed. My aunt tried to call the doctor even if the lightning might hit the telephone. I stayed back in the dining room and picked up the broken glass and the pitcher and wiped up the floor with a rag. After a while Dr. Blake came from town, then he went away.

When Dr. Blake was gone I went upstairs to see my grandfather. I shut the door and went in his room, which was almost dark, like always, and quiet because the hail didn't beat on the roof any more. He was lying on his back in the featherbed, with a sheet pulled up over him, lying there in the dark. He had his hands curled loose on his stomach, like when he went to sleep in his chair holding the pipe. I sat on a split-bottom chair by the bed and looked at him: he had his eyes shut and his mouth hung loose, but you couldn't hear his breathing. Then I quit looking at him and looked round the room, my eyes getting used to the shadow. I could see his pants on the floor, and the silver cup on the dresser by the mirror, which was green and wavy like water.

When he said something I almost jumped out of my skin, hearing his voice like that. He said: "Son, I'm gonna die." I tried to say something, but I couldn't. And he waited, then he said: "I'm on borrowed time, it's time to die." I said, "No!" so sudden and loud I jumped. He waited a long time and said: "It's time to die. Nobody loves me." I tried to say, "Grandpa, I love you." And then I did say it all right, feeling like it hadn't been me said it, and knowing all of a sudden it was a lie, because I didn't feel anything. He just lay there; and I went downstairs.

It was sunshiny in the yard, the clouds gone, but the grass was wet. I walked down toward the gate, rubbing my bare feet over the slick cold grass. A hen was in the yard and she kept trying to peck up a piece of hail, like a fool chicken will do after it hails; but every time she pecked, it bounced away from her over the green grass. I leaned against the gate, noticing the ground on one side the posts, close up, was still dry and dusty.

I wondered if the tobacco was cut up bad, because Uncle Kirby had gone to see. And while I looked through the gate down across the pasture where everything in the sun was green and shiny with wet and the cattle grazed, I thought about my grandfather, not feeling anything. But I said out loud anyway: "Grandpa, I love you."

My grandfather lived four more years. The year after his stroke they sold the farm and moved away, so I didn't stay with them any more. My grandfather died in 1918, just before the news came my Uncle Kirby was killed in France, and my aunt had to go to work in a store. I got the letter about my grandfather, who died of flu, but I thought about four years back, and it didn't matter much.

I LIVE IN VIRGINIA

Mary Everett

Those who write about contemporary affairs fall rather neatly into two groups. Reporters by instinct, like Sir Philip Gibbs and Mrs. Harrison or Mr. Hemingway, are inclined to emphasize particular situations by means of cumulative and selected fact rather than by extensive comment. Other writers, like Mr. Tomlinson and Mr. Morley, prefer to enlarge upon specific occasions by means of generous recollection and wide allusion. The ability thus to distinguish between the passing and the permanent and to measure the present in terms outside itself is, of course, a rare quality.

Talent of this order is hardly to be expected from Mr. Julian Meade, whose book, *I Live in Virginia,** makes no claim to do more than supply a running account of life as it is actually lived by various classes in Virginia today. The author's own experiences naturally furnish the central theme of the book, but around them are clustered incidents that reveal the points of view of friends and family, of mill hands and strike breakers and negroes, of educators and governors and publishers. Both tragedy and comedy are imbedded in the nature of this material, and one can easily imagine to what use a more roving and satirical mind than Mr. Meade's might have subjected the pattern of life thus simply sketched out. The author, however, attempts no abstract analysis of his environment—a task plainly requiring a disposition and tension of mind not yet

* New York: Longmans, Green. $2.50.

his. Instead, he adopts his sister's careful advice to be content with accurately delineating as many sides as possible of the life that goes on around him. Intent upon this purpose, he has assembled in this book some highly revealing snapshots of all kinds and classes of people.

The story covers the period from the author's rather unhappy boyhood to the close of the account in 1935, when, still unhappy, he is engaged in the distribution of governmental relief. The chronicle runs on easily from Danville to Lexington and the Virginia Military Institute where, at sixteen, young Julian was, one feels, as miserable as it is easily possible for a boy to be. His sojourn at the University was fortunately less depressing, but these years were also not unmixed with gall. After his graduation, he found it impossible in his native environment happily to reconcile school teaching with strike-reporting. He therefore returned to the University with some idea of venturing further into the world of learning, but he soon decided against a life of scholarship. A summer as assistant to two erratic boarding-house keepers on the Virginia shores next served to enlarge considerably his conception of men, women, and manners. Returning at the season's end to Danville, he became at length finally persuaded that a sociological interest centering in local textile strikes and an educational outlook averse to current classroom practices could hardly be expected to coincide with the ideas of the local school administrators. First hand experience in the mills now tempted him, and there he was able to use to good advantage his photographic eye and ear. Finally employed to distribute Federal relief funds in Virginia, Mr. Meade closes his book in considerable disgust with life in his own time and place—a disgust so pervasive and thorough that he is moved to see in the North a magic and a potency common to all utopias.

Future historians grubbing in our ruins for contemporary accounts of life in Virginia can lean with some confidence upon this book, for, although many, including myself, will sharply dispute the author's evaluation and interpretation of his evidence, few will question the essential accuracy of the evidence itself. Mr. Meade's surname on the title page of his book furnishes fair guarantee that he is no newcomer hastily critical of the customs of the people whom he describes. Other indications suggest the author is joined deeply, though protestingly, to the soil from which

he springs, and belongs by right to the culture of which he is a caustic critic. He is not ashamed to acknowledge his veneration for the University architecture, for Mr. Jefferson, or for General Lee; he recognizes county lines; he likes his family, even garrulous members of it; he admires pretty girls not too briskly intelligent; he understands in what sense particular words are used in the South. In fact, his ear for the spontaneous gradations of Southern speech as unconsciously employed to indicate variations in class and color is quick and amazingly accurate. One cannot easily imagine this author stumbling over every-day, colloquial expressions, as does Mr. Stribling, for instance. This close, if unconscious, identification of himself with the land and people of which he writes sets Mr. Meade well apart from other protesting young Southerners who proclaim their belief that all is not well below the Potomac.

Mr. Meade does not think all is well either, but his criticisms bear a mark of actuality based on affectionate, if impatient, intimacy with his material. They are sharply distinguished by this quality from the taunts of, say, Miss Grace Lumpkin or from the horrific imagination of Mr. Erskine Caldwell. Mr. Meade is frank to admit that negroes suffer injustice and discrimination in the South, but he does not represent them as left by intentional white cruelty to drown in wells or be eaten by hogs. More naturally, they ask cheerfully for old clothes, or fail to turn up to cook breakfast. The difficulties of the negro in the South are as much appreciated by him as by Mr. W. T. Couch, but he understands better, I think, that these difficulties are not so much the result of exact intention as of negligence on the one hand and incapacity on the other. In the same realistic fashion he approaches Southern labor troubles in the cotton mills, which, while convincingly set forth, are not emphasized out of all proportion to other aspects of the general picture. Upon this point I do not speak as one occupied solely with theory, for, during the period of which he writes, I myself visited mills in Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia, and talked with owners, townsmen, and workers in various strike areas. In fact, I had scarcely left Honea Path when the guns began to roar. In his description of the general labor situation in the South, Mr. Meade attains a fine balance and exhibits a freedom from heated and excessive

class bias in any direction that should hearten depressed liberals the country over.

He is also correct, I think, in discerning that frenzied excitement can be stirred in ignorant people as quickly by unscrupulous labor agitators as by itinerant preachers exhorting to quite another kind of salvation. He is right, too, in representing the Southern laboring population as in large part naturally free from the bitter and driving discontent that inflames the unions of the North. His account of the conversation carried on by workers in the mills in their free periods should be earnestly studied by petulant editors of various reform publications. Until recently, Southern workers and employers actually have hardly understood the meaning of the term *class struggle*, and, as Mr. Herbert Agar points out, they have been quite disinclined to range themselves in recognized, open, and purposeful class animosity—that end so ardently desired by various fiery groups now in revolt from the American Federation of Labor. In his accurate rendering of the naturally noncombative spirit and temper of Southern laborers when they are unstirred by revivalistic frenzy, Mr. Meade has done an extraordinarily fine piece of work. He has also succeeded equally well in representing the honest difficulty experienced by owners when called upon by the times to substitute for their careless and often kindly feudal impulses a different relationship with their workers altogether.

Mr. Meade has likewise succeeded in describing, more by implication than by argument, the restless uncertainty with which many young Southerners are nowadays filled. Too far removed from the traditions of the past to embrace with any real conviction the ideals formulated by their ancestors under quite different social conditions, they yet seem impotent either to devise or create an environment in the present more after their own taste. In college gatherings from Virginia to Texas in the past two years, I have encountered exactly this uneasiness of temper which the author's own life so well illustrates. He does not attempt to analyze the sources of this discontent, which is as yet more wide-spread than articulate, but he does reveal its disintegrating strength. His elders all very well illustrate that vein of iron which Miss Glasgow so accurately places among the best of Southern virtues, but his contemporaries seem fitted

neither to endure nor to master the circumstances that surround them.

Mr. Meade differs from many recent commentators on Southern affairs in several important particulars. Being less prejudiced than others in favor of certain forechosen political theories, he is able more candidly to present the several aspects of any controversy and openly to set forth the curious combination of autocracy and *noblesse oblige* still evident in the interrelationship of Southern society as a whole. He has very nearly realized his desire to avoid undue concentration upon any one particular segment of the section's life. Furthermore, he is also happily possessed of a sense of humor (except with regard to his own affairs) that enables him to recognize incongruities and excesses when he meets them, whether among those of high or low estate. No one well read in contemporary criticisms of Southern life will pretend that this soothing quality is at all common to that heated discussion. Abolitionist pamphlets could scarcely have been couched in more intemperate and exaggerated terms, for instance, than much of the present material centering around the fate of the share cropper and the mill worker. From this extreme and excited dogmatism, Mr. Meade is saved by his natural sagacity and by prolonged and first hand acquaintance with the people under discussion. Long after Jeeter has ceased to draw credulous crowds, Mr. Meade's account of similar people will continue to be read, I think.

Having gone along thus far in more or less harmonious accord with the author, I am compelled at this point to part company with him. With his actual description of the unsettled life that today veers and eddies around him in Virginia (or, for that matter, in the South at large) I find myself in substantial, if regretful, agreement. With his conclusions, so far as they are clearly formulated, I am not in such sympathetic accord, nor do I think they follow as the day the night from the premises that the author on the whole so accurately defines. Mr. Meade apparently believes, like Thomas Wolfe, that somewhere in this naughty world—perhaps in the magic North—men willingly do justice and love mercy. Toward that mythical realm, then, in open flight from an environment filled with plentiful evidence of human frailty, the author apparently hopes to set out, leaving behind him in happy abandon the cares of his present existence.

The present dilemmas of the South, I am persuaded, cannot be solved by the comparatively simple methods of renunciation, flight, or imitation—methods deliberately chosen by Mr. Meade and by other disgruntled citizens of that region. In the end, unless these Southerners can reconcile their own deepest tendencies with their natural environment they will find themselves as much dissatisfied with New York or Chicago as Mr. Harold Stearns, in similar flight from the whole United States, found himself to be with Paris. Southerners, I think, can no longer avoid the arduous labor of direct and tedious thought about their own problems, which differ, in many important ways, from those of the nation at large. Mr. Meade would appear to be willing to toss up the sponge and retreat to New York. Such facile shifting of responsibility seems to me at least shortsighted, for ignorance, vice, and depravity are by no means exclusively centered below the Potomac.

Few Southern writers seem nowadays to feel for their native land an instinctive attachment beyond argument and existing beneath any and all variation—an attachment like that manifested for England by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher today and by Henry Ryecroft in the past. The ability to loathe the sin while loving the sinner is a Christian virtue confined, among Southern authors today, largely to Miss Glasgow, Mrs. Peterkin, Mr. Freeman, Mr. Kendrick, Mr. Young, Mr. Davidson, and other agrarians. Mr. Julian Meade, for all his admiration of Miss Glasgow, is as yet obviously uncertain whether his natural instincts will lead him to enroll himself in this company, or whether his sociological interests will force him into the left camp among people stirred to immediate and hot-headed violence by conditions which all just men deplore. Other young Southerners in quantity share his indecision, and their attitude betrays the absence of any clearly conceived and unified sense of values among them—an attitude as depressing in the present South as in the nation. It is to be hoped that Mr. Meade will address himself to the painful task of helping to reform in his whole section a coherent philosophy setting forth deliberately chosen ways of life adapted to the varied needs and capacities of the population. Perhaps his next book will reveal a more deeply imagined purpose leading to an end more praiseworthy than personal escape.

HERALD OF IMAGISM

John Gould Fletcher

THE PUBLIC, or rather that part of it which is interested in modern poetry, may well feel that there is cause for congratulation in the fact that the chosen biographer of the late Amy Lowell is not only a poet and a scholar of established reputation, but also a New Englander. Mr. Foster Damon has appeared before, with carefully documented and painstakingly accurate studies of William Blake and Thomas Chivers. It is no derogation to his competence as a biographer to say that, in writing the life* of Amy Lowell, he had a subject still more congenial to him. For as he reveals in his opening chapter—as good a synthesis of the Bostonian spirit as I have ever read—he is himself steeped in the peculiar and paradoxical mixture of individual independence and Puritan conformity, of world-wide curiosity and rigid intolerance, of reformist zeal and of naïve self-satisfaction, that have made New England what it is and has been ever since the days of its settlement.

The subject of his chronicle, Amy Lowell, was herself a New Englander of New Englanders—a fact which she tried desperately hard to conceal, and which, despite all her efforts, sticks out at every point in her life and poetry. I recall that when I first met her, in the summer of 1913, I was not made aware of the fact that she stemmed, in all her virtues and defects, from the longest-lasting and least-varying tradition of Anglo-Saxon origin we now possess upon this continent. Nor did I realize just

**Amy Lowell: A Chronicle*, by S. Foster Damon. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. $5.00.

what the New England tradition was, nor what was her relation to it, till I came, over a year later, to live in Boston and to see her frequently for well over a year. It is true that I had been prepared for the shock that the New England mind and conscience can administer to a Southerner such as myself, by previously attending Harvard; but I had gone through its portals as in a dream, guarded by the illusion (if illusion it was) that the Southern culture to which I had been born was dead, and that the only culture worth noting, since the South seemed unlikely to recover its lost heritage, existed in Europe. Later events have shown me just how much I was mistaken, both as regards the possibility of a Southern revival, and as regards the possibility that any day European culture worth mentioning might continue. In the case of New England, I still tend, since my association with the subject of this biography, to mingle my admiration with a certain amount of distrust, which the readers of this review will no doubt note, with satisfaction or the reverse, as they go on with this essay.

In nothing is the New Englander, and particularly the Bostonian, more immediately identifiable than in his ability to grumble at, to criticize, and privately to underrate New England. Mr. Damon notes this fact in his opening chapter, and it is as true of Amy Lowell as I suspect it was true before her of Channing and Alcott, Hawthorne and Emerson. Born on February 9, 1874, she inherited the momentous burden of a tradition which would have been an absolutely crippling handicap to any ordinary mortal, and unbearable even by such a dynamic nature as hers, had there not been added thereto also the possession of wealth more than is usually given to most of the children of this planet. Mr. Damon gives us full details concerning the background of her ancestry, and in doing this he is quite correct, for it may be said with perfect justice that her life corresponded at almost all points with theirs. They had, one and all, ever since the first of them appeared in Massachusetts in 1639, given lavishly of their lives, talents, fortunes, and offspring to the upbuilding of that Commonwealth of the Calvinist Saints they had erected on the shores of Massachusetts Bay. They had been, in turn, landed aristocrats, shrewd lawyers, and great builders of the industrial empire of the spinning-jenny and the power loom, which, after the Napoleonic Wars, cast its shadow over New England as it had already cast its shadow over England itself from the end of the

eighteenth century onwards. They were wealthy, arrogant, autocratic—yet with a touch of erratic and capricious generosity. Several of them had been pamphleteers, all of them philanthropists, and a love of horticulture and gardening was also predominant. And—above all—they were trained, from infancy up, to belittle and despise the influence of women. The eldest of Miss Lowell's brothers, nearly nineteen years her senior, spoke of his father as follows: "Mentally he was the son of his father; as a matter of fancy as well as of fact, his mother's share in him being chiefly physical," and also declared his ancestry to be an outstanding example of "prepotence in the male line." All this was bound to have its effect on the fact that Amy was born, not a boy but a girl.

Not only was the fact that the child was of the female sex a handicap, as Mr. Damon abundantly shows, but also the fact that her nearest sister was already twelve years old at the time of her arrival. She was born so late as to be known as "The Postscript." Her mother was already a perpetual invalid; her father was immersed in the multifarious activities incidental to the life of a highly successful New England industrialist; he was busy with the Lowell Institute, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Boston Athenaeum, and a host of other concerns—not to mention the fine estate in Brookline whereto he had moved in 1866. He was, at the time of Amy's birth, already forty-four years of age; yet his New England energy was in no wise diminished. One of his daughters later said of him that he rose in the winter mornings at 4:30 and in the summer at 4; walked the streets of Boston without an overcoat; and went in swimming every day in the summer, till the end of his life. His education had been eminently of the practical sort; but his wife had been carefully trained, spoke several languages, and was musical. The perpetual invalidism, to which she was already subject, left Amy the liberty to do what she liked.

The result was that she became at first completely the tomboy. Lacking as she did any predisposition toward the feminine in physique or temperament (Mr. Damon makes it plain that the later squareness, stoutness, and general masculinity began early), she was brought up, according to family legend, largely by the coachman, and to the end of her life kept her passion for horses and driving, despite the disastrous fire that destroyed the family stables—burning several fine horses to death—in 1909. Her

education was, as far as schools went, practically nil. At ten she was finally sent to school, and emerged at seventeen, but as Mr. Damon's selections from her early writings abundantly demonstrate, never acquired any assurance in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. She was a failure in French, German, and Italian—and learned nothing of either Greek or Latin. What she lacked in education, however, she made up by the habit of omnivorous reading, in which she was encouraged by both parents, so that she began collecting books at an extremely early age. The first spate of juvenilia and fairy books—as Mr. Damon says, they were all books of adventure or fantasy, with not a single sentimental tale among them—were succeeded by hard book-learning. Shakespeare, who was undoubtedly spoiled for her by being presented as a dry-as-dust academic model; undoubtedly, her cousin, James Russell Lowell; Longfellow and Matthew Arnold; and presumably Tennyson. It was all pretty stiff, the correct stuff for a genteel Bostonian girl of the time to assimilate. But it lacked life. What wonder that she preferred sleigh-riding or tomboy jokes, or devoured volume by volume the novels of Scott? But, still more remarkable is the fact that, despite the grind of schooling, she discovered in her father's library, at seventeen, Leigh Hunt's "Imagination and Fancy" and through its pages got an insight into what poetry was, as well as the knowledge that a great poet named John Keats had once existed. That fact stuck with her for over twenty years. She read Keats, now or later, but could not read Shelley, as her father—knowing Shelley to be an atheist—had refused to possess a volume of his poetry. She also, now or later, read the poet who, next to Keats, was most to influence her later, and whose work presumably replaced in her affection the icily correct image of Matthew Arnold: Robert Browning.

What is obvious, from a careful reading of Mr. Damon's account, is that as she grew to womanhood she felt that, despite the passion for reading, for driving horses, for dances and other social entertainments which she was able to indulge to the full, she was getting more and more maladjusted to the world in which she had been asked to exist. As early as 1897-8, she was sent away to Egypt for the entire winter, to live on a diet of tomatoes and asparagus, in order to overcome the distressing and increasing tendency to stoutness. Damon wisely prints many of the

letters she wrote from there; and these, as well as her more juvenile fairy-stories written at the age of eight, reveal the possession of a natural and vivid literary talent. But who, among her circle, had ever heard of a woman poet? It is true that Emily Dickinson had succeeded in being one, by letting no one know about it; but the only poet the Lowells had ever heard of was her cousin, James Russell Lowell, who had so nicely balanced the careers of writer and diplomat, and whose "Sir Launfal," as well as his physical presence, had overawed her girlhood. After her father's death in 1900, she had to take up a whole series of practical activities and duties which apparently were his sole legacy to her: she became a member of the Executive Committee of the Brookline Education Society, Chairman of the Library Board in the same town, a member of the Women's Municipal League, and a prominent participant in the affairs of the Boston Athenaeum. Meanwhile, as early as 1905, she was satisfying, or attempting to satisfy, other hankerings by buying all the Keats material she could lay her hands on, and by indulging in daydreams of becoming herself a writer.

Her physical disadvantages had already barred her from a happy and successful marriage. Literally, she had nothing to expend her store of energy—which was very great—upon, except upon her house, her garden, her library, her horses and dogs, and the more or less meaningless round of philanthropic and social activities expected of one in her position. The régime of diet which her doctors had prescribed for the Egyptian trip left her already a prey to insomnia and to perpetual attacks of nerves. What wonder if, under the circumstances, she fell under the spell of the life of the theatre, with its elaborate artifice, its stressed emotions, its nocturnal brilliance? She began to cultivate actresses, and soon learned that she herself might easily—but for the fact of her physical shape—be as good an actress as any one of them. Duse enthralled her, and while still under the spell, she found that she could write verse. Why not cultivate this gift? So from 1902 onwards, the ten years preparation began which was to launch her on the world in 1912 as the author of a book, a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly,* translator of poetic plays, and friend of Josephine Preston Peabody, who was all that the good Bostonians of that day expected from a woman poet.

II

Amy Lowell was already thirty-eight when her first poetic venture thus timidly appeared; she was to die a little over twelve years later, while at the height of a public career which had already achieved more notoriety than that of any other poet on this continent, and which was well on its way to the achievement of permanent fame; she left behind her seven volumes of poetry, one of poetic translation, three of literary criticism, and the vast two-volume study of John Keats, not to mention the enormous hoax of "A Critical Fable"—surely no small output for twelve years! She had already become a legendary figure, and her name had been carried from England to Japan. Yet it is obvious and it cannot be gainsaid that whatever qualities her work showed later must have been implicit somehow in the efforts of those thirty-eight years when she grew up in Brookline, unknown to the world without, and yet preparing for her attack upon it.

What is to be found, I think, in her earliest efforts, which Mr. Damon wisely prints, is the possession of a vivid but undisciplined imagination. The earliest of all, the fairy stories collected by her mother under the title of *Dream-Drops,* show her full of love of such fantastic and incredible adventures as are normal to a child who is bursting with vitality. There is, however, nothing particularly domestic nor feminine about these stories. Neither is there anything domestic or feminine about the later letters from Egypt, which reveal her as already possessing a singularly vivid, direct, sensuous apprehension of reality; much the same kind of apprehension as reveals itself in the early work of her mentor, John Keats.

It is interesting to compare these early literary exercises with the poems contained in *A Dome of Many-Colored Glass*, the volume with which she first made a bid for the suffrages of the public in 1912. The former leave behind just as clear an impression of bouyant high spirits as the latter exhale the atmosphere of repression, mufflement, feeling gone stale and conventional, thought cramped into unyielding forms. Mr. Damon makes a valiant effort to prove that, for a first book, *A Dome of Many-Colored Glass* is not so bad, quoting Miss Lowell's own statement to the effect that it contained at least three good poems; "Before the Altar," "Behind a Wall," and "The Road to Avignon." It is true that these three

poems are probably better than anything in the entire collected works of that idol of the Bostonian public of the day, Josephine Preston Peabody; but the tone of the whole book is not echoed by them, but by such verses as these, which the author herself, with merciless clarity, called "Fatigue":

Stupefy my heart to every day's monotony,
Seal up my eyes, I would not look so far;
Chasten my steps to peaceful regularity,
Bow down my head, lest I behold a star.

Let each day pass, well ordered in its usefulness,
Unlit by sunshine, unscarred by storm;
Dower me with strength, and curb all foolish eagerness.
The law exacts obedience. Instruct, I will conform.

And these lines were printed when their author was already past thirty-eight!

The conclusion is inescapable that the writer of these lines was growing increasingly baffled and unhappy; a soul divided between the claims of the wealthy but tame society in which she lived, and other more urgent claims of the imagination which pictured other possibilities, but which had not yet found a clear means to release. This means was found when, in June, 1913, she arrived in London with a letter of introduction from Miss Harriet Monroe to Ezra Pound, and there first heard of the school of poets who called themselves the Imagists. Within the space of two brief months, as I can testify, her entire being was transformed, and she became overnight, as it were, the Amy Lowell which the public later knew.

The event had been preparing in her for many years. She had, without cavil or doubt, considerably more literary talent than almost anyone that I have ever been able to discover living in Boston at that time; but it was a talent that had lain fallow, neglected, a plant that had been pruned and lopped to a stunted and dessicated shape. The Imagists, with Pound at the head, poured out for her all their headiest goblets of poetry distilled from the Anglo-Saxon, the Greek, the Chinese; Flint and the author of this essay were ready with news of the doings of the Symbolists in France; the Russian Ballet, with Diaghileff and Bakst, Nijinsky and Stravinsky, was giving forth to London an unsurpassable display of free, intoxicating

rhythms wedded to great music. So that which was in Amy Lowell grew monstrously, and became an enormous tree, overshadowing the landscape. At thirty-eight she was set headlong on that course of endless experimentation, restless and omnivorous adaptation of other poets, unlimited—and, alas, often inchoate and disordered—creation which only ended on the day of her death. The Imagists: Pound no less than Aldington, Flint no less than Fletcher, H. D. no less than the humblest scribbler who hung on the outskirts of the movement looking for a nod of approval, had provided her at last with a key to unlock everything, good and bad, noble and base, in her imagination. Having achieved so much, after years of frustration, she felt she had a right to throw the key away.

Whether she ever was, or could be, an Imagist; whether she ever actually understood Imagism, is a point not worth discussing. Imagism at least taught her that poetry need not be written in the style of Tennyson or Matthew Arnold to be good as poetry. It taught her to avoid clichés, inversions, sentimental flourishes, metrical monotony. It taught her that much of the French poetry which she had read before embarking for London was better than the corresponding poetic product in England. It taught her to avoid the sentimental preciousness, the false simplicity, of its chief rival, the Georgian school. It taught her not to be ashamed of herself. And it taught her to boast of her "externality" as a poet; an "externality" derived from the use of the so-called "unrelated method."

Since I was the chief inventor and experimenter with this "external" method, and since my own association with Imagism has often been called in question by various critics, it behooves me here to say something on this subject. Although I was far from subscribing to Aldington's or H. D.'s elaborate Atticism, or even to Pound's early blend of Provençal and Browning, I had already met the chief protagonists of the movement before meeting Miss Lowell, and had been especially impressed with the theories of Hulme, Pound, and Flint—then the best brains that the movement possessed. Especially, I had been fascinated by Hulme's ideas, with their sharp concreteness and exact definition. Such sentences as those Mr. Damon prints, to the effect that "thought is prior to language, and consists in the simultaneous presentation to the mind of two different images"; "that style is short, being forced by the coming together of many different

thoughts, and generated by their contact"; that "the form of a poem is shaped by the intention," had struck a completely responsive chord in my mind, which had already been stirred by the intellectual ferments of William James and of Bergson—thinkers on parallel lines to those set up by Hulme.

It seemed to me that, if the basis of Imagism resided in such ideas as these, then I was indeed an Imagist. Although I disliked intensely the public logrolling and back-slapping in which the group generally indulged, I felt that, at least, I entirely subscribed to their theories. As Mr. Damon is at pains to point out (and his account is the most complete and exact of the years 1913-1914 I have ever read, years of as great import to my own development as to Miss Lowell's), I tried to support the Imagist movement and group in every way possible. My chief concern at the time—and for years later—was to write a poem of considerable length and scope about the life of some great modern cosmopolitan city, preferably London. I had already attempted this back in 1909-1910 in Whitmanian form. In my "Dominant City," published in the spring of 1913, I had attempted another solution, in forms dictated largely by Baudelaire and Verhaeren. I was now already feeling my way to a third tentative solution of this problem, when I met Miss Lowell.

This solution was to leave the poet's mind entirely blank, like the *tabula rasa* which, as Locke had said, we all are endowed with at birth; and to make the resultant poem entirely reside in the simultaneous presentation to the consciousness of as many contrasting images as possible, derived openly from, say, one's association with them as one walked through the crowded streets of the city which one happened to be inhabiting. Thus was to be accomplished, in perfectly pure form, that passage of analogies "from the eye to the voice" which Hulme had described as of the very essence of Imagism. This method described, as Mr. Damon points out, to Miss Lowell as early as June, 1913, was displayed finally in three experimental poems, each called "London Excursion," of which only one ever saw the light of print. These were written the following spring, of 1914, and represented each a day spent in London, and a return to an adjoining suburb. In the first, the protagonist came into London by train; in the second (the sole one published) on the

top of a bus; in the third, he travelled afoot. I have forgotten what became of the other two, but the readers of the first of the anthologies published under the title of *Some Imagist Poets* may still read the bus top version of "London Excursion" as an example, at full bloom, of my "unrelated method."

This method so interested Miss Lowell that she promptly adopted it as her own henceforth, and called it the "external method." Personally, I was in doubt then, and am still more in doubt now, as to whether to call such a means of writing "external," is entirely correct. It is true that the whole content of such writing resides in the fleeting impressions the external world makes upon the eye. But the identity, the self-awareness of the poet, observer himself under such circumstances, is far from being annihilated by contact with dead objects, as Keats thought. It is rather heightened, brought to an extreme pitch of intense subjectivity, ready to receive still further and further revelations from them. So much so, that the state in which such poems can be written is not far from the state of mystic illumination as described in the lives of many of the saints.

Unfortunately, it seems to me, Miss Lowell's personal dislike of mysticism (of which Mr. Damon makes something, but not really enough) operated so strongly that she never fully understood what the "unrelated method," as developed by me in 1913-1914, actually had as its object. Nevertheless, out of that method, and out of the tenets of the Imagists, and out of her own general adaptability and unlimited energy, she pretty soon had made up a new kind of poetry that left everybody gasping and which carried her on from triumph to triumph till death closed her career in 1925.

III

What sort of poet was Miss Lowell? Here Mr. Damon's book—though its later chapters are no less fully and exactly documented than the earlier ones—will no longer serve to tell us. He calls his book, appropriately enough, a chronicle; and a chronicle is absolved, by the very nature of the case, from exercising too elaborate a critical judgment. He is, furthermore, perfectly correct in saying that, when Miss Lowell died, she was still at the height of her powers. Nevertheless, had she been granted another dozen years of life to add to what she had already acomplished between

thirty-eight and fifty, I do not believe that she could have done much more beyond stressing, clarifying, and further exemplifying what had been, all along, her original intentions.

Few poets enter the lists with a body of critical theories concerning their art ready-made, and waiting to be broached, whenever called upon. Of all the poets of the period between Edwin Arlington Robinson and the present day, I can recall only one who was able, from the beginning, perfectly to double in both rôles, as poet and critic of poetry. That one was T. S. Eliot. Thanks to various accidents of transplanting, Eliot's criticism, if not his poetry, has had more effect on England than on the poetical development of this country. Miss Lowell was not, primarily, a critic of her own accomplishment. She was not primarily a critic at all, as anyone reading straight through her life of Keats can testify. Her researches into Keats' life and background are as thorough as the critical opinions she derives from Keats' own writings are superficial and perfunctory.

What she was is best described by saying that she corresponded exactly to the view of America once taken in my presence by an extremely cultivated Englishman, who remarked, "You Americans have a genius for improvisation." Alike in her own work, and in the organization of the forces that fought the battles of the "New Poetry," she displayed the immense quickness and resourcefulness of the Yankee ancestry. Frankly she pillaged and imitated others, only to give to each borrowing and imitation some native energy of her own. As for the public—that was her audience, come to listen to her, and to applaud; or to be scolded if unprepared to do so. Her career presents some curious parallels to that of Vachel Lindsay. Each had a bad education. Each suffered from the narrowness and insularity of his environment. Each escaped by means of collecting the largest audience possible and by holding these spellbound. And each died in the midst of the fight. Some of Lindsay's poetry will doubtless survive all changes and variations in fashion, and so will some of hers. Mr. Damon need not have exercised so much painstaking care in making out a case for all her volumes.

But even this does not describe her talent fully. Had she, like Lindsay, one type of poem which she could write so perfectly as to make everything else she did seem utterly unimportant? The answer here must be in

the negative, to anyone who, like myself, has read and enjoyed a great deal of her work. Nothing is so immediately perceptible in it as her ability to assimilate all kinds of form. There was scarcely a poetic school with which she did not flirt, from the Anglo-Saxons down to the present day, except possibly the metaphysical, beloved of Eliot and his followers. Nor was there a form in which she did not write, from the sonnet to "polyphonic prose," except possibly dramatic blank verse (and had she lived longer, she might have attempted even that). Her work is an encyclopedia of poetic modes rather than a mode in its own right.

Is this a defect? The concensus of critical opinion, not of this generation alone, seems to leave established that it is. With the solitary possible exception of Shakespeare, there is not a single major poet in the English language who does not bear upon the surface of his verses the impress of an obvious and highly individual style. And the same is also true of the French poets, with the exception of Victor Hugo, to whom, as Mr. Damon points out, Miss Lowell had herself given early and uncritical admiration. The reason, indeed, why such minor and less comprehensive poets as Baudelaire and Verlaine make a greater appeal, in the long run, than Hugo, is that we know better where to place them. Their talent, such as it is, is sustained from first page to last; it is not, as in Hugo's case, a matter of random flashes of genius imbedded in a great mass of absurdity.

Miss Lowell's talent was largely of the Hugo order. It was a strange rôle for a woman poet to fulfill, to write the kind of poems she did; but everything about her poetic career was highly paradoxical, and one has only to compare the work with, say, Edna St. Vincent Millay's or Elinor Wylie's, to have such paradoxes fairly leap into the eye. She gallantly set herself an almost impossible task, and may be said to have succeeded to her own satisfaction, at any rate. Whether she has succeeded or can succeed in passing the challenge of posterity, is another matter.

Since her day, the question which the Imagists, as well as every poet of that day, totally ignored has come up again in an aggravated form. The question is, "What position—political, moral, social—should the poet take up in regard to the modern state?" This question, as I say, Miss Lowell found no reason at all for answering. To her, the mere fact that one could write good and original poetry was a guarantee enough that he

had something of value to offer to mankind. It was on this basis that she championed other poets; and it was on this basis that she wrote poetry herself.

Nevertheless, the question has come up, and there have been at least two attempts to answer it. The first of these has been supplied by the Southern Agrarians, who were linked together for poetic purposes under the name of "The Fugitives." These argue that, since their political, moral, social views point towards the restoration of property in land, the checking of industrialism, and the creation of a body of independent settled landowners, that poetry should also reflect the types of mind common to such a landed society; and should therefore return to the material upon which the metaphysicals worked in the seventeenth century, and on which Milton, Dryden, and later classicists worked in the seventeenth and eighteenth. The Communists, on the other hand, argue that all poetry hitherto has, with rare exceptions, postulated the political, social, and moral viewpoint of the bourgeoisie. They propose a drastic alteration in viewpoint, rather than any specific new revolution in form. The poet may be free, under them, to choose any form he likes, so long as he uses it definitely in the interests of the proletariat.

Between the Agrarians' following of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and Marvell—largely as seen through the eyes of Eliot—and the Communists' insistence that the Agrarians are all disguised fascists, and that it does not matter in the least how a poet writes, so long as he writes on behalf of the working class—between these two contending parties, the case for the "new poetry" so gallantly championed by Miss Lowell and others years ago, seems now definitely to have gone by the board. But there is no real reason or cause for despair. Poetry, and especially American poetry, which at the time of the Great War and for a few years after, seemed in so flourishing a state, has now lost favor with the public—and without public favor, what art can flourish? The poets of the present day must simply bide their time, till the moment when the public chooses to become interested again in what they are doing.

At the same time, it is perhaps not altogether futile to warn several of the younger generation of poets (in this country, a generation lasts only about five years, as Mr. Tate has wittily remarked) that by insisting upon

the propaganda value of their verses, or upon their conformity to a given tradition, they are doing poetry itself, as well as all critical standards, a disservice. A good poem, whether the poet in question happens to have heard of Marx or not, or whether he happens to have read Donne or Marvell or not (Blake, admittedly a great poet, had presumably read neither), is simply a good poem through the possession of inherent merit. One can only judge poetry by poetry, just as one can only preserve a tradition by adding something to it. We know pretty clearly now who were the best poets up to the Victorian era; but after that, everything is doubtful battleground. Particularly in this country, the youngest generation seem peculiarly to delight in smashing all the standards set up by their immediate elders. By no such means is a literary advance possible. American poetry cannot survive, cannot achieve anything but an endless series of creative blind alleys, unless the present generation takes into account what was being said, thought and done, back in 1913, when—after years of suspended animation—new voices were heard again in the land. The moment has now come when through understanding analysis and critical appraisal the precursors of that generation—Robinson, Frost, Sandburg, Masters, Lindsay, and Miss Lowell—again must take the places that are rightfully theirs in the sight of the present day.

Mr. Damon has brought that moment appreciably nearer by the publication of this carefully documented and sympathetically understanding study. As I have already pointed out, he has not attempted a final critical estimate of his subject. I am possibly even less capable of making such an estimate than is Mr. Damon, having known Miss Lowell at first hand even earlier, and having had—at least for three years—an even closer association with her work. Yet it may be that I looked on her from a greater aesthetic distance, inasmuch as I was then, and am still, a Southerner; and though her family had been, as Mr. Damon quite correctly states, Cotton Whigs, yet they certainly were not Southerners. It seems to me that those poems of hers which will bear the longest and the sternest test of continuance and survival will not be her showy bravura pieces, but rather those works in which she deals most frankly and directly with the material nearest her hand, to wit, New England. To take but two examples: both "Lilacs" and "Meeting House Hill" are admittedly among her finest poems, and

both presuppose considerable knowledge of, and sympathy with, the New England background. Her New England is one entirely different from the New England of Robert Frost's backwoodsmen, or the New England of Robinson's decaying gentility; yet it is not less authentic, being in fact the New England of the opulent merchant princes, the progressive industrialists. Perhaps the finest and most culminating examples of the culture of that class (now in decay) are to be found in some of her works. This surely is distinction enough, as distinctions go nowadays. A judicious selection from her output (Professor Lowes made one, but I have not seen it) would, I am convinced, become an exhibit that none who cares at all for the future of American poetic expression need ever disown, or leave unread.

VACHEL LINDSAY: FERMENT OF THE POET'S MIND

W. R. Moses

THE NEARER ancestors of Vachel Lindsay were characterized by a considerable number of interests and perhaps talents. Lindsay's father, a country doctor, a Kentuckian by birth and blood, never forgave Lincoln for the Civil War. He was a fanatical prohibitionist, moreover, and a hater of tobacco. Lindsay's mother's father was a farmer and a Campbellite preacher, a sympathizer with the Northern cause although he had brothers who fought for the South, and an enthusiast in cattle breeding. Lindsay's mother was a clever woman, whose intellectual activity was directed by the early training she received in a strict Campbellite household. She liked painting, and before her marriage taught art in two small mid-western colleges. After marriage her activity was polyphase: she wrote strange playlets with a religious or moral cast, wrote and delivered speeches, especially on art, organized societies, visited Europe, urged civic reform, read religious books, studied works on Egypt and Confucius, stood strong for Americanism, believed in and tried to spread her belief in social perfectibility, fought the saloon and the diversions of the idle and godless of Springfield, opposed corruption in government, and strove for a democracy in which God's laws should prevail and men be equal as high-minded and devout citizens. I feel grateful to Edgar Lee Masters* for presenting these facts, and believe that he is correct in his observation that Lindsay's

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intellectual heritage from his mother included various conflicts which the poet was never able to straighten out.

The Mason-Dixon line ran straight through his heart, Lindsay said. His parentage made that very natural. More importantly and more unfortunately, he inherited an inclination to save the world as well as to paint and to write, and a tendency to unite the reforming urge with the artistic urge arbitrarily, if he could not do it otherwise. The enthusiasms of his parents had a counterpart, if not a result, in manifold longings and activities that characterized their son from his early youth uninterruptedly until his death. Very commendably, Masters has included in his biography such voluminous quotations from Lindsay's early diaries that the ferment of the poet's mind is wide open to observation.

At Hiram College, where he studied medicine ostensibly and poetry and oratory really, Lindsay at one time kept six notebooks. Each contains the dedication, "This book belongs to Christ," though the subjects of the six were, respectively, study of the dictionary, rhetoric, phrases, verses, new words, "when nothing else"; culture; homiletics; style; speaking; and pictures. The entries are the records of introspective examinings, plans for conduct and attainment, speculations—often dogmatic and often fatuous—as to the truth of things. Moral and religious reflections are extremely numerous. In the notebook on rhetoric, for example, this kind of thing is early included: "In the world there are two forces, nature which extends through every function of man, and love whereby man may be divine in power. Two beings, God and man. No commands of Christ are impossible. Follow every commandment vigorously. Get even with the devil. Comply with the conditions by which Christ keeps possession of men . . ." Not only during his college period but for long afterwards, Lindsay was deeply obsessed with religion and Christ, a secular Christ who should serve as practical leader and example in the modern world. All his life Lindsay remained true to Campbellite theology; more or less guided by it he drew his specifications for his "Map of the Universe." Also, that theology is not quite lost sight of in *The Golden Book of Springfield,* a vague and unimpressive work in which the nebulous mysticism attracts less attention than the damp sentimentality with which the author depicts conflict between beautiful righteous people and ugly wicked ones in his Springfield of the

future after it is, presumably at least, well on the way towards the ideal. But something was wrong with either Lindsay or his religion, for the latter failed to stand by its possessor in a serious pinch, and never determined a definite code for him or for other people. Masters evaluates it thus: "It was superstition as a plaything, a spectacle that always engrossed Lindsay's imagination. It was a show, a circus. His Christ was out of Santa Claus, his paradise out of the baubles of Christmas." I am afraid the evaluation is correct.

Some of the poet's other tastes and activities were to a degree connected with his religion. For example, there was the admiration of the Y. M. C. A. which he recorded in his Hiram notebooks. There was also his lengthy period of lecturing on art under Y. M. C. A. auspices; and doubtless his verbal campaigning in behalf of the Anti-Saloon League as well.

At the same time, he had a quantity of interests not necessarily dependent on, or connected with, religion. In college days and for years afterwards he studied art assiduously, although he never became able to draw well, remained all his life largely engrossed with the trivial and fanciful as subject matter, and for long held the notion that his studies were chiefly directed to the end of his becoming a Christian cartoonist. When about twenty he made elaborate plans for preparation for world-saving, plans involving more or less extended periods of residence in, and thorough mastery of the spirits of, Chicago, France, and Japan. He loved hieroglyphics, or the idea of hieroglyphics—symbols to fix the reality, the soul, of his country. And he loved his country deeply, in many aspects. Perhaps his Middle-West, soil and people and traditions, was deepest in his affections, yet at times he described himself as a Kentuckian by accident born in Illinois; again he loved Virginia above other sections; and late in life he had fine (though also harsh) words for the west coast. He liked Kansas, too—it all went into the melting pot to produce the "soul of the U. S. A.," which was his quest (though in one poem he proposed allying himself with gipsies and returning with them, in the distant future to India). He lauded men he took to represent the best Americanism—Johnny Appleseed, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, and such. He idealized the log cabin as an American symbol. But he also praised the motion picture, and certain other aspects of modernity. He went afield in time and space, developed enthusiasms for

Egypt and China. He was never free from the turmoil of his imagination, and the manifold conceptions, too many of them tinselly affairs, it produced.

Certainly I have not adequately represented the extent or yet the confusion of Lindsay's interests. Yet many as they were, few of the interests seemed to receive adequate representation in Lindsay's poetry. A soft nature to begin with, the poet could rarely see reality clearly and penetratingly, and from his inability, triviality frequently resulted. I suggest that Campbellite theology may very possibly have furnished him with an excuse, perhaps without his being conscious of what was happening, for regarding the next world as more important than this one. Thus it may have been easy for him to devote too much of his attention to vague jungles of heaven or palaces of Eve on the one hand, and to circuses, insects, and fairies on the other, instead of to efforts to attain the clear vision the poet seems to need.

Anyhow, Lindsay very early began writing, often to illustrate drawings in the same mood, verses about insects, fairies, moons, and their like. I do not know the date of the composition of "The Tree of Laughing Bells," but the date is unimportant, for Lindsay's manner of writing never changed significantly. The poem begins thus:

> From many morning-glories
> That in an hour will fade,
> From many pansy buds
> Gathered in the shade,
> From lily of the valley
> And dandelion buds,
> And fiery poppy buds
> Are the Wings of Morning made

The triviality and lack of distinction here must be evident immediately; and often Lindsay wrote more crudely, occasionally more childishly. At best his moon and insect and similar poems are no more than sprightly. As he wrote such poems early, so he wrote them late; his last volume, *Every Soul Is a Circus,* is chiefly composed of them.

True, in the latter part of his life especially, Lindsay claimed to be writing much of his poetry to be danced, not read. High school freshmen,

apparently, did most of the dancing. Let it suffice to remark that the poet seemingly did not do enough in the theory and practice of dance-poetry to establish the canon of a new art, and that according to present standards you cannot justify, or rather make important, trivial poetry by saying you meant it as a substitute for dance-music.

Thus a good-sized portion of Lindsay's poetry may be, for most purposes, dismissed. I have already suggested a possible reason for the poet's too-great concern with, and yet careless treatment of, the unimportant. But frequently he wrote seriously and intellectually of the important—American heroes, or the majestic Springfield to be. When he wrote in that manner of the important, unfortunately, he had a tendency to put together vague and threadbare phraseology in haphazard iambic pentameter—by "haphazard" iambic pentameter I mean rather sprawling lines in which too often, apparently only through the writer's carelessness, the heavy beats come on *and's, the's,* and *of's.*

The very well known "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight" is a satisfactory example of another type of defect. The sixth stanza is:

> The sins of all the war-lords burn in his heart.
> He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
> He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
> The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

I cannot be much pleased by a figure as crude and also vague as that in the first line; nor be quite satisfied with the indefinite description of Lincoln's Atlas-burden. Vagueness is the fault, too, of Lindsay's conception of the Springfield or the Middle-West of the future, and of his writings about city or region. Springfield was to become the place of love and joy and art and beauty and great men, but, apart from a very few such qualifications as small size, one has nothing definite to guide him in imagining the splendid city-to-be. His imagination cannot take hold of it; therefore he cannot to the highest degree be satisfied with it. A reader would hardly demand that poems about the city contain complete verbal blueprints for it, but he might legitimately ask to be spared the mist hanging about joy, love, and beauty. *The Golden Book of Springfield* (to attempt to compare which with *The Republic* would be ridiculous) ought to contain something in the nature of verbal blueprints.

Lindsay wrote a great deal of miscellaneous poetry, but having criticized the moon-poem group and the serious discussions I feel that I may proceed to a mention of the group which nearly everybody believes to be Lindsay's best. It can be observed incidentally that most of the miscellaneous poetry is characterized by some degree of vagueness or triviality or both.

Masters lists the "best" poems, and his listing is satisfactory for present purposes, as "The Chinese Nightingale," "In Praise of Johnny Appleseed," "The Santa Fe Trail," "The Booker Washington Trilogy," "The Congo," "Poems Speaking of Buddha, Prince Siddartha," "Old, Old, Old, Old Andrew Jackson," "The Virginians Are Coming Again," and "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan." I do not wish to discuss these individually at very great length. All are vigorous, all redundant, all or nearly all graced by memorable lines, and all injured by the fact, mentioned more than once by Masters, that Lindsay saw everything through his peculiar colored glasses. I am neither ignorant of nor quarrelsomely inclined towards the truism that every poet sees things individually; I believe only that Lindsay's personal vision was in general unimpressive, partly through allegiance to unsatisfactory mythology and partly through simple blindness to matter of fact. I shall mention this matter further, and likewise the fact that the poet's system of beliefs—naturally anyone's system of beliefs determines how he sees the world—never saw harmony established between its constituent elements. "The Chinese Nightingale," now, written chiefly in the headlong iambic with sprinkled anapests and more or less irregular line-length and rhyme scheme that seem to distinguish all of Lindsay's "best" poems, depends pretty largely, like all the "best" poems, upon its vigor, without which it would appear sprawling and sentimental. Sentimental to a degree it is anyhow, but not troublesomely so, on the contrary characterized by a good deal of what seems genuine sentiment. The familiar line, "Spring came on forever," is broadly appealing. Let me remark, however, that it is hard to believe the poem has anything peculiarly Chinese about it except a little external paraphernalia. It seems the result of an interest used because of the romantic flavor that could be infused into it by the poet without really mastering it. "In Praise of Johnny Appleseed" suffers from two things notably: an inadequacy of conception of the

nature of the early westward migrations that makes the beginning of the poem, with its ideal symbolization of that movement, unduly high-flown to say the least of it; and the already mentioned vagueness of conception of the splendid America to come that makes the latter part of the poem unsatisfactory. (With Lindsay subject matter was so frankly placed before form that one need make no bones of objecting to subject matter as such; and although inadequate conception of subject matter may not injure a poem's first impact, it unquestionably does injure its power of satisfying permanently.) "The Santa Fe Trail," again, is vigorous and indefinite, but a sound enough juxtaposition of the blatancy of mechanical progress and principles of beauty—however mistily expressed—not to be overcome by the blatancy.

The first poem of "The Booker Washington Trilogy," "Simon Legree," stands pretty well by itself, an arresting fancy adequately expressed in what Masters may be correct in regarding as transmuted hymn rhythms. The second, "John Brown," may be questioned on the same grounds as the first part of "In Praise of Johnny Appleseed"—questionably proper conception of the subject. The third, a "poem game" entitled "King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba," seems somewhat thin for its length, and indicates rather its author's liking for the spectacular than anything else. Lindsay's familiar "boom" poem, "The Congo," impresses me as very much more satisfactory in its first section, with its terrific symbolization of cannibal savagery, than in the later sections, where the Congo cannibals are gratuitously brought to a Christian heaven at last. One cannot but sympathize with poor Lindsay, by the way, in his impatience with the conception of him as a rackety jazz poet which audiences persisted in holding, thanks mostly to "The Congo" and "General William Booth Enters Heaven." I object to the two short units of "Poems Speaking of Buddha, Prince Siddartha," on the ground already given for objecting to such poems as "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight"; and I am out of sympathy, moreover, with addressing Buddha with as much clanging and booming as Lindsay inserts into the longest of this group. The last three poems in Masters' list, "Old, Old, Old, Old Andrew Jackson," "The Virginians Are Coming Again," and "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan" may be considered as a group. They are somewhat deeply moving poems, all of them,

inspired by noble feelings which show through and inspire parallel feelings in the reader. The power of moving deeply is a valuable asset for a poem. But of these three one might very justifiably complain in the spirit of George Moore objecting to the manifold poems about liberty, equality, and fraternity—not that I should insist at all upon pure poetry, but that just where one takes the loftiest moral ideas as subject matter he should most of all be hard and definite, whereas these poems by Lindsay are not at all hard and definite.

"Not at all hard and definite" would be a satisfactory phrase on which to center my general objections to Lindsay's poetry. That his better poems are to greater or less degree impressive in various respects I have no wish to deny. But it seems that in reading even the best of them one cannot avoid feeling a little uncertain where he is. What is the core of this poetry? I have rehearsed a list of Lindsay's main beliefs or enthusiasms. A number of them are visible in the "best" poems just mentioned, and although one were to insert other poems for some of those of Masters' preference, the essential heterogeneity of the group as it now stands would not probably be simplified. How does one establish working unity between love of romantic China, of Buddha, of negro characteristics and attitudes, of Old Testament theology, and of the best features of the American spirit, as exemplified in great Americans, to say nothing of love of these things and of the various other things that drew Lindsay's affections? The poet under discussion certainly did not answer the question, or show other people how to answer it.

The result of his failure need not have been, and indeed was not, inability to produce good individual poems. It was, in the personal field, probably at least a contributory cause to the unhappiness of the poet's last years and death. In the field of poetry it was failure to produce a sufficient body of work directed to one definite end to give the impressive effect of mass, something to be guided by or to contemplate with intellectual satisfaction, that we usually perceive in the work of great poets; that we gain from, indeed, Lindsay's biographer's own Spoon River Books. I know —I have said a number of times—that Lindsay was devoted to the idea of a great America and a great Springfield, but—I have also said several times—he did not clearly enough define the objects of his devotion to

make his celebrations of them thoroughly satisfying. The poet's intellectual inheritance, it would seem, played him false through its very profusion. That Lindsay was impelled, through his heritage or otherwise, to reform the world was probably unfortunate, though not in that it made his poetry propagandistic. It does not seem to be of moment whether poetry is propagandistic or not; the trouble is that the writer urged by too great love of reform is likely to concentrate on the *what* and neglect the *how*, to the eternal detriment of both *what* and *how*. Lindsay wrote too vaguely, and in general too carelessly otherwise.

Thus it seems proper to conclude that among the plethora of his interests Lindsay's mind did not so much grow as ferment, and that his greatest defect was the familiar one of failure to establish a really satisfactory point of view. For this reason and for his congenital inability to see things as they are—an inability Masters stresses without, it seems to me, deducing all he should from it—Lindsay cannot without question be termed the spokesman of America, though close enough analogy may exist between his confusion and that of America in general. I should not for a moment question his sincerity and the worthiness of his purpose, or his historical importance (though I have had no reason to speak of that); but I feel that in declaring the listed "best" poems, with a further list of "second best" poems, to constitute the most considerable body of imaginative lyricism that any American has produced, Masters somewhat overstates Lindsay's greatness.

GERARD HOPKINS: A STUDY OF INFLUENCES

Harris Downey

One of the major functions of critics seems to be the pigeonholing of poets according to form and subject matter. Most poets accept the static discipline of their literary fathers and, consequently, are easily identified as natural progeny, though—to degree—less easily identified as personalities. Occasionally, there is a prodigal. He revolts, encounters dissension at home, and wanders off. He returns, says C. Day Lewis, "healthy, wealthy, and wise." The generalization is safe; for, though many of them are lost in the extravagance of the foreign lands, it is only the returned conquerors who are remembered. No one is desirous of preserving the memory of an ancestor who was both a rake and a failure. Only the rake who succeeds has his history glorified in whispers and his worth exaggerated in feigned diffidence.

Gerard Manley Hopkins is one of the prodigals. Where he wandered, no one knows; nor have the hints in his letters pointed to any convincing source. Because his poetry is sensuous, he has been coupled with Keats; because he states that his "sprung rhythm" is kin to the meters of *Samson Agonistes*, he has been considered a student of Milton; because he wrote Marian verse, he has been compared with Herbert; and so on with such different poets as Shakespeare, Dryden, Arnold. But Hopkins is an original. A certain type of expression is identified with him and with no one else. When one reads the poetry of Auden, of Day Lewis, of Charles Madge, he becomes conscious of a "Hopkins influence" in many passages. Before

these poets, one may have recognized the so-called influence in James Joyce; and, even earlier, in many American poets, particularly Cummings. It is on this same basis that the nineteenth century prodigal has been compared with so many of the Jacobeans and the seventeenth century metaphysicals. This influence is technical only; it is not the profounder influence which affects the philosophy of life. Technically, Hopkins was not a romantic poet; philosophically, he was. What Hopkins said was not new to Bridges or to Patmore, but the way he said it was. He did write "Harry Ploughman" and "Tom's Garland," and once in a letter to Bridges he did express a sympathy with communism; but these utterances emanated from the altruism of a compassionate churchman, a humanitarian—not from a bitter revolt against a class in power or from a political belief. It was his positiveness of expression that made him seem to say much more than his contemporaries. Bridges was shocked by his friend's mention of communism; however, the poems on the unemployed and on the brawny ploughman provoked only a discussion of style from him.

The qualities that differentiate Hopkins from the Victorians are qualities of technique, rhythm, and vocabulary. These are the characteristics that one seeks to find the sources of and that one recognizes as influential in modern poetry. The distinction of these qualities may be noted in almost any passage from Hopkins. I quote from one of the "terrible" sonnets:

> No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
> More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.
> Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
> Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?

and from "Harry Ploughman":

> Churlsgrace, too, child of Amansstrength, how it hangs or hurls
> Them—broad in bluffhide his frowning feet lashed! raced
> With, along them, cragiron under and cold furls—
> With-afountain's shining-shot furls.

The most striking thing about Hopkins is his vocabulary; and after one has lingered long enough on the poems to know the merit of the unusual conjunction of words, he would ask where Hopkins found such a method of composition. One would not readily recall anything similar in English

literature. But read any portion of Richard Stanyhurst's *Aeneid*, first published in 1582:

> Lyke fyerd pitche skorching, or flash flame sulphurus heating:
> Flounce to the stars towring thee fire, lyke a pellet, is hurled,
> Ragd rocks up raking: and guts of mounten yrented.

The strange spelling is a result of the Renaissance poet's attempt to fix the quantities of syllables, an attempt which, to those who know the failure of the "Areopagus," is futile. The grammar and the composites ring modern, nor can they—in the light of Hopkins—appear ridiculous.

Stanyhurst was a prodigal who wandered too far for stern parents. He was disowned. Thomas Nash dismissed him with, "He had never been praised by Gabriel for his labour, if therein hee had not bin so famously absurd." So, Stanyhurst, despite Edward Arber's edition of 1880, remains an undesirable ancestor, the nadir of the schoolmaster's pedantry. Yet, Stanyhurst deserves interest, not only because of his technical likeness to Hopkins but also because he bears many resemblances to modern experimenters.

Mimetic words as poetic property are uncommon in any age of poetry but our own. However Stanyhurst and Hopkins employed them profusely and consistently. The first gives us such combinations as *clush clash, thwick thwack, chuff chaff, crack rack*, Shakespeare's serious *hurly burly*, and Peele's satirical *dub a dub*. Compare composites in Hopkins: *lush rush, fickle freckled, adazzle dim, pash crash, crust dust*, and so on. Consider Stanyhurst's coinage of descriptive nouns: *hillrock, windpuff, hairlocks*; and compare Hopkins' *flake-doves, meal-drift, flockbells, dare-gale, windpuff-bonnet, loop-locks*. These devices are not incidental; they are found to be used consciously and consistently in the works of both poets. Much has been made of Hopkins' agglutinated words: *hailropes, spendsavor, wolfsnow, Heavengravel, doomfire, deathgush*, and others. Whether Stanyhurst was passionate in his thinking or not, he also rushed verb and substantive together. Note: *lustilad* (lusty laid), *spurgalde* (spur galled), *adgemate* (age mate), *pillotoy, skitop, heapeful*, and many more. It was hardly the same motive of immediate conjunction of emotion and intellect that made Stanyhurst use unusual prefixes. Still, he writes *bebroidered, upbotched, beveiled, uphast, embay*; and the later poet follows the prac-

tice: *overvaults, disseveral, forefalls, forefending.* Both poets use dialectal forms at will. Stanyhurst's Anglicized French is no more surprising than Hopkins' Welsh.

Readers today are not disturbed by what Arber called "kitchen rhetoric." There is no defined poetic diction; the poetic qualities of the words are determined by their contexts—not by their individual connotations. Such was Stanyhurst's unwritten thesis—at least, in his experimental work; for it is not to be forgotten that he did write conventional sixteenth century lyrics just as Hopkins wrote decorous Victorian poems. Any word, any phrase had potential poetic qualities for Stanyhurst, who, incidentally, like Hopkins, avoided Latinized vocabulary and, because he found a fresher vigor in Anglo-Saxon, recalled many words already obsolete. One may certainly be surprised to find such phrases as *cock sure* and *somewhat nappy of the spigget* and such sentences as "Forelittring bitches whelp blind puppies." Hopkins writes

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow.

Such a surprise element is used by most modern poets. Evidently Stanyhurst felt the vigorous force in deliberately descending from the sublime to the commonplace. After a great heroic flight of verse, he abruptly turns to such a figure as "Like a wayward obstinate old grey horse." Stanyhurst is, of course, most often ridiculous; Hopkins rarely is, though he is not without fault:

A life-belt and God's will
Lend him a lift from the sea-swill.

One may laugh at this bathetical couplet, but one would never laugh at a whole poem of Hopkins'; for there is too much that is profound in the subject. This is not true of Stanyhurst, who had nothing but a "technicality"; if there be any other purpose in his *Four Books of Virgil*, it belongs to Virgil and is hardly recognizable in its strange garb.

This comparison of the Renaissance poet and the Victorian does not pretend to be a study of influence; for it is doubtful whether Hopkins ever read the verse of his fellow Catholic convert. The interesting thing is that these two poets, living three hundred years apart should clasp the identical weapon for revolt, the first writing in a period where language—broken

suddenly from its tradition—was a bewildering labyrinth without the dramatist's clew of thread for guidance, and the second writing in a period where language was only too well defined to offer force or nicety of expression.

When Hopkins began to write poetry, he was forced to find new implements or else to be content only to contribute to the putter of workmen feigning construction. The language had lost its stimulus, the word its connotation. Swinburne was wandering about in a circumstantiality of words, and the words themselves had lost their moorings. A deal of verse floated about in the haziness of the poet's unobjectified feeling, never becoming actually "written." As a result, even thinking became vague; and poetry, having been so long reflective, became static. Hopkins realized this failing and set out to find a new vocabulary. He refused to follow his image in a wordlorn wilderness. He made bold, deep cuts in his landscapes so that one could not run across them without carefully watching his path. One had to take all crevices and, though, when in the depths of one, he might have lost sight of the bird's-eye view of the whole, he was rewarded with the definite comprehension when the end of the path was reached.

Stanyhurst, for his attempt to find some standard for the language, was damned for his "rounce robble hobble Of ruffe raffe roaring" and was soon forgot; Hopkins, who was not only an innovator but also an artist, has been imitated. When we read from Auden

> Me, March, you do with your movements master and rock
> With wing-whirl, whale-wallow, silent budding of a cell,

we think of Hopkins. As a matter of fact, we think of him too much. Auden is forgot; his personality has been shut out from the poem. No one could write a whole poem in the manner, for that manner is wholly Hopkins' own. The influence on Day Lewis is less obvious:

> Where's that unique one, wind and wing married,
> Aloft in contact of earth and ether;
> Feathery my comet, Oh too often
> For heav'n harried by carrion cares.

For here it is the alliteration and assonance that suggest Hopkins, and these characteristics have always been in the English tradition; it is only

the degree of boldness and richness that identifies them with the priest's poetry.

Another influence of Hopkins is that on rhythm; but, like the influence of his vocabulary, this has been general rather than specific. His system of rhythm with its counterpoint, reversed feet, rove-overs, outrides, has never been accepted as a government for poetry; nor has the modern poet found his method of marking accent feasible. What is important is that Hopkins proved once again that the rhythm of speech is the rhythm of the best poetry, that English metrics is not bound by rules and usage. This rhythm is, of course, not original with Hopkins. It is the tradition of English verse. Running rhythm did not appear until after Wyatt. Ultimately, Hopkins' metrical system is only a negative one; it is a reaction against the rhythm superimposed upon English poetry in the sixteenth century. Its positive element is only in the natural freedom of spoken poetry; and, once this freedom is accepted, there remains no need of the poet's terminology. Hopkins himself has given sufficient hints of the sources of his metrical system. The letters to Patmore and to Bridges* show that he first felt the need for a rhythm more plastic, more capable of bringing poetry again to the oral tradition. This rhythm he soon found. "It existed in full force in Anglo saxon verse and in great beauty," Hopkins said. "Greene was the last who employed it at all consciously and he never continuously; then it disappeared—for one cadence in it here and there is not sprung rhythm and one swallow does not make a spring." However, this type of rhythm did not die so soon or so completely. Milton's *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were exceptions to Hopkins' generalization. Hopkins had probably never read much of Donne; for that matter, his knowledge of seventeenth century literature was negligible. It is only the poet's own and preceding century that missed the swallows.

No doubt Hopkins has had some influence on the rhythm of modern poetry, but it is difficult to conjecture the depth of that influence; for, though many moderns—especially Auden and Eliot—are writing in the oral tradition, the fact that there exists such a tradition suggests that Hopkins was not entirely necessary for the twentieth century poet's devel-

**The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Volume I. Letters to Robert Bridges. Volume II. Correspondence with Richard Watson Dixon.* Edited with Notes and Introductions by Claude Colleer Abbott. New York: Oxford University Press. $10.00.

opment of the manner, regardless of how much he may have stimulated that development. The likeness between Hopkins and the moderns and between the moderns and the seventeenth century metaphysicals has led to the generalization that Hopkins is a connecting link between the two groups of poets. This generalization can be made more specific, although one must keep in mind that there are differences between the two poets in the very qualities that couple them. Poetry of wit is indistinguishable from its content; poetry of the emotion is not. Donne and Hopkins both wrote in conceits, but the conceits of the one were more intellectual—of the other, more sensuous. Read from Hopkins' *Starlight Night*;

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in the dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!

Before the reader can think, he is hauled right into the poem itself and, with the "Where?" forced from him, becomes part of the poem. Donne may speak in the imperative:

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,

but somehow the reader does not, in his excitation, react so subjectively; he responds rather as an auditor experiencing a work of art. He may sit apparently calm and erect, with his hair in order, his eyes tearless, his heart-beat normal; for Donne is setting before him a straightforward affair of logic. His experience—which is, *for the immediacy*, in the objectivity of his intellect, apart from self-consciousness—is an apprehension. Hopkins presents, for the most part, the comprehension, the direct feeling. To understand him, to appreciate him, we must surrender ourselves to him. To remain aloof is to watch an individual whom we consider a little too naïve or too much moved to a passion beyond reason; but once we, too, are prepared to be impressed, to be disturbed and serious and solemn, we may feel exactly what the poet felt. For Hopkins, the poem is a direct medium between the creator and the recipient; it is a medium which condenses and exaggerates but which does not, even for the moment, translate the creator's feeling into a purely objective representation. One may not

definitely say that the conceits of Donne are entirely intellectual whereas those of Hopkins are entirely emotional, since a conceit embodies both intellect and emotion; but of the two poets one may note a difference of degree. Hopkins to a great extent lacks a logical framework; Donne may wander into the emotional as far as he wishes, he always has the logic, the intellect, which the reader occasionally loses sight of but which is always there and which is always seen in analysis. The dependence upon the emotion in Hopkins results in his greater subjectivity, his speedier directness, and—consequently—his naïveté.

This direct method of Hopkins' is the method of Day Lewis and the rest, but these latter often abuse it. Conveying a feeling so directly to another is difficult because the writer is easily fuddled by his own flow of impressions; he may allow his emotions to carry him away in a vicissitudinary stimulation or to lead him into ridiculous exaggeration or, because he is always the actual center of the poem, to make him appear an object of self-pity. Hopkins made several minor slips as a result of his emotional creation, but such errors as that of having the stranger in "Epithalamion" take off his boots last when he was preparing for a swim is forgivable. Hopkins was never lost in a total redintegration of emotional associations. Day Lewis and Auden often are; and, unless a poet is capable of strict self-criticism, it is perhaps best that he write objectively, at least that he prepare himself to fall back upon logic.

Like all dramatic poetry, the poetry of Hopkins exists outside its content, even though the technique used to convey that content is, for the nineteenth century, revolutionary. The connection of the two types of conceits as exemplified by Hopkins and Donne is a result of that misconception of metaphysical poetry as something quaint, odd, obscure. With this distinction in mind, one may see that there is a difference between the poetry of Donne or Dryden and that of Auden, Madge, Day Lewis, and MacNeice. The latter group write in a series of shocks; but those shocks, as in Hopkins, are almost entirely emotional. There is, however, a characteristic that connect Hopkins and the whole latter group with the seventeenth century metaphysicals, the fact that the poems of all—unlike the poems of Milton, the Romantics, the Elizabethans—must be trans-

lated from the page to the mind rather than from the mind to the page. This is true of all "conceited" verse.

Hopkins, then, did not introduce anything entirely new into the English tradition, though he may have been the first to revolt against the Victorian poetry and though—because he was a fine poet—he may have demanded more attention and provoked more confidence than many experimenters before him. Whatever influence he has had, and is having, is entirely technical; and, though one has said that "the true influence of one poet on another does not show itself so baldly," one is inclined to believe that the change of technique embodies the fundamental growth of English poetry. The rhythm was revolutionary only in comparison with the contemporary verse; the change would doubtless have come anyway; Hopkins only gave impetus. The type of vocabulary and the word combination still carries with it a limitation because it is recognized as Hopkins' own. Eventually and fortunately, this identity will be lost when it will have had time enough to identify itself with the body of English poetry.

THE CALIFORNIA OAKS

Yvor Winters

SPREADING AND low, unwatered, concentrate
Of years of growth that thickens, not expands,
With leaves like mica, and with roots that grate
Upon the deep foundation of these lands,
In your brown shadow, on your heavy loam
(Leaves shrinking to the whisper of decay)
What feet have come to roam,
what eyes to stay?
Your motion has o'ertaken what calm hands?

Quick as a sunbeam, when a bird divides
The lesser branches, on impassive ground,
Hwui Shan, the ancient, for a moment glides,
Demure with wisdom, and without a sound;
Brown feet that come to meet him, quick and shy,
Move in the flesh, then, browner, dry to bone;
The brook-like shadows lie
where sun had shone;
Ceaseless, the dead leaves gather, mound on mound.

And where they gather, darkening the glade,
In hose and doublet, and with knotty beard,
Armed with the musket and the pirate's blade,
Stern as the shadow by the savage feared,
Drake and his seamen pause to view the hills,
Measure the future with a steady gaze.
But when they go, naught fills
the patient days;
The bay lies empty where their vessel cleared.

The Spaniard, learning caution from the trees,
Building his dwelling from the native clay,
Took native concubines: the blood of these
Calming his blood, he made a longer stay.
Longer, but yet recessive, for the change
Came on his sons and their sons to the end;
For peace may yet derange
and earth may bend
The ambitious mind to an archaic way.

Then the invasion! and the soil was turned,
The hidden waters drained, the valleys dried;
And whether fire or purer sunlight burned,
No matter! One by one the old oaks died.
Died or are dying! The archaic race—
Live oak, white oak, and valley oak—ere long
Must crumble on the place
which they made strong
And in the calm they guarded, now abide.

THIS LAKE IS MINE

Thomas Hornsby Ferril

Spaniel and stick, I walk around a lake
In City Park in Denver, Colorado.
We walk an hour: an hour's an increment
Of history to any hickory stick,
Or town, or boy, or ghost, or lake of water.

This lake is mine: this popcorn gravel edge
Of water holding brass band overtures
And willow roots and carp and lilac roots,
And rumbling lightning thunderheads behind
The music-nudging row-boats and the swans;
And black behind the arc-lights are the beasts,
The wolves, the stagnant bears, the city panthers,
But never a sound comes from the nodding bison
Dragging the gold-braid music through their beards.

There is a bell that calls the row-boats in
At evening's end and girls in organdy
And young men wearing flannel trousers come
To shore remembering the inland click
Of water in the willow-drooping places,
And lilac panther cries and far-off waltzes.

No other water ever smelled like this.
I was a little boy: I knew the feel
Of criss-cross sleepy benches pinching green
And the blare of the beautiful beautiful big brass horns,
Then mother saying: "Come, we're going home . . ."
Home was a black direction toward the beasts,
Home was a sleepy flavor in your mouth
Through cottonwoods to a yellow trolley car
With windowsills that tasted of varnished varnish.

No other water ever was so still,
So still for grappling hooks engaging death.
Remember how she looked?
The broken garter?
The angled wrist? The dripping willow plume?
The high-laced patent-leather boots with tassels?
The amber-shining thigh?
It was a woman.
Women have legs but they are not like ours.

No other water ever was so quick
For making willow bark for knives to cut.
"What promise shall we keep, we've made so many?"
The willows walk away. They change their places.
"Which was our tree? I thought the tree was here.
"Of course I love you. Why do you keep asking?"

No other water ever was so slow
For making pines grow taller than a boy.

II

Now while I stroke these rushes with my stick
And chew this bitter twig of almond willow,
I see the blue bow of the Rocky Mountains
Bending around my city to the West,

Bending from Yucatan to arctic roses,
And spanning in one single summer's day
All seasons: springtime, summer, autumn, winter.

It's quiet here, but if I hook my wrist
At arm's length I can cover with my hand
The rattling steeples of the jagged rock
Slitting the cotton paunches of the hail.

Here it is lilac time, one kite still flying.
I follow the kite-string up the sagging sky
To crystal ranges where the pines as tall
As masts of ships are deep in summer snow,
Their tips a finger's length above the crust,
Like cotyledons in a glacial garden.
Against the violet ice I can discern
The spruces bristling on the lower hog-backs,
Like hairs of iron a horse-shoe magnet drags
From little sand-pile mountains in a schoolyard.

So I go dreaming up a bellied kite-string
Into the old economies of water . . .
The dripping of the summer-inching glaciers,
The water trickling down this continent,
The water bringing beaver hunters back,
The water sluicing gold out of the mountains,
The water bloating oxen into gas,
The water changing cottonwoods to cities,
The water climbing lattices of clay
Into the root hairs of the grama grass.

The air is clear for seeing snow too far,
And I could tell the boy who flies the kite:
We are the lizards panting in the salt-weed,
We are the gasping fish, the wilted larks,

The wetted finger hissing to the plow-share,
We are the dust that turns the sun to blue
Over the blistercress, the soda places;
And I could tell the boy who flies the kite
About the yellow cactus blooming here
Before this lake was here or we were here.

I lie upon my belly on the grass,
I whisper names of motor cars that glide
Reflected upside down among the fish . . .
De Soto, Hudson, Cadillac, La Salle,
The river men, the frosty men uphill,
I whisper names that are the names of ghosts . . .
Fitzpatrick, Lisa, Jedediah Smith,
Mackenzie, Coronado, Ogden, Hearne,
Singing the long song to the nameless mountains.

Where is the yellow gold, the fur, the amber?
Which is the river to the Seven Cities?
How far beyond the sunset are the mountains?
What mountain river flows into Cathay?

The snows have melted questions into answers,
The river singers slowly change to water:

Bill Ashley is a waterfall in Utah,
And Father Escalante is a river,
John Hoback is a river in Wyoming,
John Day's a river out in Oregon,
Kit Carson is a river in Nevada,
Bill Williams flows into the Colorado,
Jim Bridger is a lake that turns no wheel.

Some of the dead are water . . .

And my stick,
From walking far and changing histories
Of little things like ants on rainy flagstones,
Is blunted at the end.

I whirl the stick.
I scar the lake, a sweeping shoulder stroke.
The drops of water splash into the gravel,
And there are lenses, if I needed them,
For altered history within one drop
Alive with lucid water animals
That perish on my shoe in sunlight warm
As sunlight sloping down the afternoon
The river namer, old Bill Williams, died,
Sunning himself, his back against a tree,
Somewhere in mountains no one knows about.

Maybe it helps, or ought to help, to think
Of miscroscopic water animals
And old Bill Williams drying in the sun,
As giving angel-like advice to us,
Telling us:

Hurry! There is time to throw
Your stick into a high box-elder tree
To bring a winged samara spinning down!

Yet if you do not need a spinning seed,
Or only seed and not the spinning down,
You may have other uses for the time
It takes for not yet being dead . . .
Or loving.

III

The time it takes for not yet being dead
Is ticking in the watches in the pockets

Of people stopping cars beside this lake.
They come here to make love. They're not molested.
The motor runs a moment longer here
And stops as if it were not planned to stop.
It's not too dark to see a flying bird,
Yet dark enough for the wrist that turns the key
To turn the woods on on the other side.
They look like woods. Love tries to make them woods.

The lake is clouding as a mirror clouds.
There's naked silk against the gear-shift lever
And light comes from the wrong part of the sky
To make lips redder than the blood that burns
Into their upward-stroking syllables.

I snap my fingers and the lake is older,
The lids of eyes are older, and the lips;
The hair-spring in a watch is measuring
The jerking in the muscles of a heart;
The grass is working and the trees are working,
The anther working and the needle pumping,
The heart is pumping and positions change:
A carp has crossed the shadow of a duck,
And deep within the dark mechanics of
A willow leaf tomorrow gropes for use.

Positions of the lovers change and change,
The knee, the wrist, the spine, the cheek, the thigh,
The eyes are open and the eyes are closed,
The muscles of the lips and tongues and throats
Make air make sounds: *I love you! I adore you!*

They hardly see the rain-drops on the wind-shield,
They hardly see the evening on the fenders,
They hardly see a misty circling bird.

I know this bird that circles rainy water,
All silverness like dust of aspen bark:
Its name is Forster's tern, a random thing
Intent on fluttering in no direction;
But if I fix a sight-line from my stick
Across the water to some mountain top,
The random bird will intersect the line,
Winging the very space he used before.
It may be fins that brings him back to fish,
I only know the circling bird returns.

The silver bird the lovers hardly see
And hardly need returns long afterward . . .
Over the helix hair-spring of the years,
Over the lake unfinished, love unfinished,
And I can hear a lonely whisper saying:

It must have been . . . because I can remember
The way the water looked, and I remember
The mountains and the rain against the willow,
And I remember how a silver bird
Flew over us and over us and over us . . .

So is there need for hills behind a face,
And wings against the transitory hills,
So would I take one cooling summer locust
Into my heart to sing beyond erosion;
And if I say this night to you, my lover:
"The locusts are asleep," my heart is saying:
"God bless you, but if Time outlive our God,
Time bless you, dear . . ."
I whistle to my dog.

RETURN

In Mem. M. B. O'D. ob. MCMXXV

George Marion O'Donnell

In this the decade of my reasoned grief
I would create an image for the time
Against my negligence, for at our door
The beggar Death has lately prayed for alms.

Once generous, and so impoverished now,
The keepers of our house were miserly.
(Forgive this one denial of the poor,
Our Father, since our portion is so small.)

And having come once more into the house
I would create an image, mould a face
From mind and stuff of mind with the mind's hands:
Our early bounty when our store was large.

But that was long ago; and in revenge
The beggar Death has thieved our imaged gift.
I can but thank the keepers of the house
And bless them with my silence into peace.

II

I have come home to my appointed place
In sun-tormented mornings. And I hear

The yellow shrieking music of the heat
At breakfast as I bow to say the grace.

I walk toward noon the dusty graveyard road:
I must recall how time was measured off,
The count in black wood boxes, bits of board
Heading the knotted mounds that grass neglects.

And here the paralytic afternoon
Lies fingering the grey and splintered boards
Of leaning backyard fences, dying fall
Of yellow sound in primal arrogance.

I can recall our measurement of time,
Our images for day; but still the hour
Lacks fit memorial. I had not meant
So whole a gift, of mind as of the heart.

III

And if I had not come there would have been
No memory of shadow by the glass,
No chase behind the shadow to the dawn.
Yet I shall cry behind the chase and say:

The chase wants living quarry for pursuit.
Holding the shade of a tree in thin hands,
Leaning toward water and bending lips for speech:
Thus marbled in the mind she stood. But now

The marble face erodes with tears, demands
For restoration ampler skill than mine.
I can but thank the keepers of the house
And bless them with my silence into peace.

O courtlier far Amfortas pondering
Upon the fierce catalysis of pain
Before the guiltless fool knelt to adore
And children's voices choired the hall with praise!

AUTUMN AND MRS. NOEL, OLD

THE LATER light strikes blindly;
Fall's reverberance dislikes
Smells of the rainwashed vine
Torn by the early wind, waxen by the window
Where she sat to mend—of afternoons
The sunlight-seeker for her mind.

Trees were thin. And there no light
But grey, and grey rebounds from blue;
But in the light no blue.
The grey of twilight, scarlet sounds
Of twilight; scarlet to grey
The sounds were all she knew.

And through the winter she weaves
By greyest light, no light but grey;
And through the winter weaves
By greyest light hereditary strength
Remembering more scarlet twilit sounds
Between the night and day.

This would come to pass at length:
Southward silver of wings,
Grave autumn harbinger, slight
On October mornings; and she
Sitting by the vines a graver omen
More profound than grey light.

And Richard, come in from hunting,
Held up the kill before her glass-filmed eyes
Beside the windowsill against waxen vines—
Held the kill, silvergrey to green. This is after
The later light strikes blindly; this before
The grey sounds crust upon their minds.

IN THE DELTA, REMEMBERING

Tomorrow we'll forget the midnight hate
And wildness of our speech, you said. Be sure
My friend, my very wise and learned friend,
Tomorrow and tomorrow and forever
The mind stands arbiter to vicious hearts.

But that is past in time

In this the season of the rattler's threat
I write you from a land where the mind coils
Itself a snake beside the dusty road.

The gate hangs latchless from a rusty hinge
And errant dogs invade Miss Sally's yard
To hide their bones in black, rich soil and stain
The porch where Beauregard once, long ago,
Saluted with a hatless Creole bow.

But that is past in time

Before this harsh perspective we should pause,
Perhaps in awe,
Display a careful grief
(Staccato woe of leaf
On autumn tree).

But ours a gift of windless afternoon.
The eyes see
The windless afternoon
And drag the windless shade with playful claws.

And I shall say: But that was long ago

In this the time of thunder in the dry south,
The time of weevil cracking the young boll,
I yet have space for memory and love:

Returning to our frozen midnight words
Remembering Miss Sally's mask of pain—
Her Rupert feeding sparse grass in the orchard—
Her face hanging bodiless by window glass
And the bloody sword that ghosted by the pane:

Not frightened by the rattler's diamond head
The water stillness of the cottonmouth.

MIRRORED DEAD

The glass that hung in Martin Anding's house
Hangs on my wall; grey men, a fabled age
Are mirrored in the glass two ways.

I sought
A figure from the shard for quiet rage:
What cunning architect secured the walls
Of Anding's house, left mine preyed on by mice?
A mage designed the conjure while we slept
To grave our shields with infamous device,
Rusted our arms that guiltless vampire swords
Must starve in desuetude: the while a pox
Grows fat upon our soldiers and we dream
Salvation from the bestial paradox.

While Martin Anding, dandified and vain,
Lies slovenly besotted in his bed
And hears the harlot ghosts carouse next door,
The red clay blanket wound about his head,
All day I thought to lay beside my hand
The fragment-mirror, so to character
Its heydey as one standing by a bier
Marks mouth and cheek, the skull-contouring hair
For meditation in his formal woe;
But knowing how the images of grey
Coats, wound about the violent shroudless dead,
Hang in the glass, encrystalled from decay,
I was afraid to lift it from the wall.

INJURED MIND

These are the trappings of the injured mind:
The August street in sun, the pointed eyes
Of negro children begging from the light
Parenthesis of shadow, awninged doors,
Transparent shadow from the skirts of girls.

In Turley Street an aged negress turns
Her face to westward, face to sunset cloud
Above the gentle river where no bells
Sound Angelus into the sworded fire:
The face is creased with weeping. Ashy, grey,

She dreams the rooftree down, the age at peace,
And bends to sweep the doorstep for the dark.
These, the impedimenta of our thought,
Shackle the mind at nightfall and forbid
Heroic metaphors of dusk and dark:

The dusk and light like marbles caught in sleep;
The plowman dropping rein to cry their shame
Up to the shepherd in the moveless hills;
And metacarpal bones we crushed with nails
Sooner than guilt unthink or sin avenge.

MASK OF CHRIST

To EARTH from heaven, torture; must the breed
Of earth then torture heaven with a sword?

So by the seashore Peter spoke, and later
Warming his hands beside another fire
Said otherwise what time the rooster crew
Awaking to his barnyard lechery
While Peter lusted, crouched beside the flame,
And mouthed his three denials.

Mask of bronze
Instruct us in rigidity of forms,
Firmness of mouth and fixity of eyes,
Lest we be lured to pity, from our praise
To pious mumblings only, with no wrath
Remembered, at the hour of morning lust,
To postulate the evil in the room.

"Return, O Lord!" Scorn twists the mouth of bronze.
"Instruct us in thy will!" Scorn twists the mouth.

Turning and twisting in our worship now
We spot the walls, defiling. Other prayer
Would celebrate our time more fittingly:

To pray deliverance unto the mouth,
Deliverance to scorn, deliverance
To eyes that plow the mind and turn the brain
In sun, bronze eyes remembering they look
On men, remembering they looked on flesh
And nails in lechery when darkness racked
The day that eyed perversion at Golgotha.

THE MAKING OF A MODERN:

The Poetry of George Marion O'Donnell

John Crowe Ransom

THE POETRY of George Marion O'Donnell is rich, genuine, difficult, and unsure. Inevitably the last; the poet has not yet attained to his baccalaureate degree, not yet I believe to his majority. I do not mean that his early success in publication is premature, for the work deserves it. All the better because, publishing at this stage, we can see him experimenting, a little uncertain, not so much of his technique as of his intention, and progressing steadily in the direction called "modern." He furnishes us with a study.

If I must tell what I understand by the term *modern,* it will have to be by a number of impressions. A poetry is modern: when it is tortured, when it feels as if it had come hard, when it is not facile, "spontaneous"; when it does not worry so much about success in communication as about fidelity to the object presented, and when, the object being individual, there is naturally something in the poem which is private, over and above that which is public; when it strikes us instantly as serious, sincere, as if it were the veritable voice of our generation, trying powerfully to escape from the intellectualism which has nearly destroyed us. Milton had a degree of this modernism, as much as was appropriate for him at that period, and while still a young man—though marvelously practised in his sense of the thing—set down his possibly regretful repudiation of the easier and happier rôle played by a predecessor:

> If sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native woodnotes wild.

A little patronizing this may be. But we do not have to wait to find it in Milton, for I do not know what the metaphysical poets were about if not the conviction that it was already high time to absent them from felicity a while; that is, from a poetry whose technical mastery had been so thoroughly communicated that it was about to realize the stage of quantity production. And certain dramatists, perhaps Chapman and certainly Webster, had not found Shakespearian numbers adequate for the expression of effects which they saw in dramatic situations; hence a roughness, oddness, unreason, unsweetness, in their characteristic passages.

II

In a poem, according to Hegel, we have an exhibit of "concrete idea"; that is, of general ideas, or universals, receiving their concrete or sensible expression. The ideas are to shine through the things, persons, events, that embody them. (The things, persons, events must be transparent enough to be shone through.) And which was to come first, the idea or the expression? In Hegel's view, which was Plato's view, the backward man worked his way towards the pure ideas through the concrete ideas; but the enlightened man would be going backward to find them. He would be doing it only as an educator, as a missionary, for the enlightenment of other men still further back. It was in this way that the arts were the handmaidens of religion and of the Absolute.

However that may be, it is safe to say that we want our poetry to come from enlightened men, to have a certain mental age or maturity about it. And the poetry to which we are best accustomed, which we might call our "literary" poetry or our club-members' poetry, seems definitely to be composed in a certain order: first the idea, and then the concrete exhibit. The concreteness does not stray very far. And the logic which puts it into order, into sequence and pattern as a unit poem, dominates the act of composition. Such poetry is certain to be approved, because it is understood, but it is likely to serve up only a warmed-over experience.

Perhaps the poets would be well advised to stick to this formula; it is a way for them to avoid the reproaches of a certain public. By some such formula we have acquired indisputable poetry from our poets; yet it must be confessed that its power over us wanes progressively with familiarity.

By it most of the fine poets in our language have made their mark; yet some modern poets seem not to be interested in making further marks of that sort, and we follow their work with more interest than might have been expected. I suppose my own experience as a reader is representative (Is not that supposition the first axiom of a critic?), and I know that I have progressed, or advanced, or decayed, from a "dogmatic slumber" in which I contemned modernism and all its works into a state of expectancy (which may be morbid) that is always predicting the turn a poem will take and rejecting the poem if it takes that turn; so that if the imagination of the poet does not leap, or modernize, I detest him; and then I try to rationalize my taste. I am rationalizing at this moment, in this piece. I am led to the proposition that a little privacy, a little obscurity, is a grateful sign of authenticity in a poetry; and, conversely, that a poetry that is too easy will hardly do any longer, even if it is Shakespeare's poetry.

For there was Shakespeare. Myriad-minded; but to be that is the ambition of an actor, or a journalist. Not limited by nature in his literary talent, yet he did not usually find anything unique to say, but nine times out of ten was content with the distinction conferred by a superb facility in saying everything. (It is at the tenth time only that we sense him as bursting the bonds of convention; probably this is often enough.) He wrote reflective passages thus:

> Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry:
> As, to behold desert a beggar born,
> And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
> And purest faith unhappily forsworn . . .

One gathers that he has found the subject for a poem, namely, that the world is full of wrongs, and that the poem will consist in the illustration of the principle. By way of illustration he lists precisely eleven cases, as many as the sonnet permits at the rate of one per line, if you reserve room for a flashy couplet at the end. The world deals harshly with: (1) desert, (2) destitution,* (3) faith, (4) honor, (5) virtue, (6) perfection, (7) strength, (8) art, (9) skill, (10) truth, (11) good. The items are amazingly coördinate; they are abstract characters but they receive a

*Unless the sense of this one is that ill-desert is honored by the world with wealth.

fairly lively treatment; they nearly take body and live. This is the very highest order of trade competence.

Again, Shakespeare writes drama, and a king speaks. There are principles in his discourse too, for a king must say something, and there is an imperious sequence of plot to carry forward, yet it is quite easy to poetize this action in a usual way. Thus:

> No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
> Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood,

meaning that the civil war is over and he may now lead his subjects upon a crusade. Immediately the king lives for us as a person, with actual perceptions and feelings; and the civil war, and the other objects of which a king may treat, live also as great concretions of circumstance. Excellent.

First the prose thought, then its translation into poetry; or first the idea, then its release to the imagination to realize it, dissolve it, diffuse it, materialize it, naturalize it, in the original and contingent world from which it presumptively came. Poetry is a reaction from ideality. But evidently it need not be a very severe one. When it has been done publicly a great deal it does not take a very hard effort of the imagination to do it again.

Mr. O'Donnell would certainly participate in this disparagement of the popular order of poetry. Yet he is not quite emancipated from his pious and traditionary regard for it; I take it he was brought up on it, and it has meant a great deal to him, as it should. In the poem "Injured Mind" he treats of this matter; he wants the poet to be faithful to his actual observed world, and not to do the ideas the gratuitous service of supplying them with the usual dress occasions. The actual "impedimenta" of our thought forbid, for example, the old heroic metaphors of twilight; as,

> The dusk and light like marbles caught in sleep;
> The plowman dropping rein to cry their shame
> Up to the shepherd in the moveless hills;
> And metacarpal bones we crushed with nails
> Sooner than guilt unthink or sin avenge.

He stands on an admirable platform, and yet all the same he has managed to conclude this poem with a burst of heroics; he manages to decorate others in the same way, with the same disclaimer. For instance:

I mention patient sounds that play no part
Where nightingales in Leucas sit and sing.

Again, in the poem "Ancestor":

No map connotes
The dusk at Roncevaux mythed of silver horns.

Above all, in the conclusion to the fine "Return," where, according to his note, he makes use of Wagner and Verlaine at once to deprecate his own unworthy memorial gift:

O courtlier far Amfortas pondering
Upon the fierce catalysis of pain
Before the guiltless fool knelt to adore
And children's voices choired the hall with praise!

These passages are in the old style, but very consciously; it is not as if the author were swept out of his purpose. As to the minutiae of his diction, he is rarely betrayed by haste or carelessness into the pretty or "literary" phrasing, the picking up, for example, of adjective epithets which do not really represent the testimony of his own imagination. He is too intelligent in his honesty for that. And as to his general outlines, he never employs one on that Shakespearian level of simplicity which I have illustrated.

III

I have referred already to an old form of modernism, or at least an old method of breaking away from a poetry which has become predictable and easy. Metaphysical poetry.

It is hard to define this subtle way of evading the routine that produces the commonplace of poetry. I remark, with due respect to Mr. Brooks' able papers in previous numbers of *The Southern Review,* that we have hardly yet got a clear picture of its strategical procedure as an act of composition. I suppose the metaphysical poets are really mock-rationalists, mock-Platonists. They pretend to offer a very accurate analogy for their object, within which they discover close scientific discriminations. But the rationalist who follows them must be infuriated very soon to discover that they are playing. They pursue analogy beyond the bounds of reason; it is an application of wit. They certainly offer a poetry which can be elegant, which does not have to eschew polysyllables and idealistic (and

scientific) vocabulary. The net consequence is to convince the reader that the living spiritual thing which they analogize in physical terms is real and important though not susceptible of definition by the determinate sciences; which is not a dire but a blessed consequence.

Mr. O'Donnell has a metaphysical strain, though it is my belief that he employs it with less than perfect precision. Metaphysical poetry might be called the classical pole of our modern poetry, and I suppose Mr. O'Donnell would have to be placed nearer to the romantic pole.

I admire the tone and outline of "Return," but I deprecate some of its detail. Here the general subject of the exile's return is presented under the figure of a very formal occasion demanding a memorial gift. It begins,

> In this the decade of my reasoned grief,

but is not *decade* inaccurate for *decennial*, or conclusion of the decade? Then the transaction with the beggar Death worries me a good deal. It is but lately that he prayed for alms at the door, and that the impoverished keepers of the house refused him (apparently with reluctance). Then the poet thinks of the time when the bounty of the house was large, and of a certain face, and adds:

> But that was long ago; and in revenge
> The beggar Death has thieved our imaged gift.

In revenge for what? And as for the thieving of the imaged gift, shall we understand that it occurred ten years ago, and that the thing thieved was the face whose image is now created as a gift to the present occasion, or the face whom the beggar imagined the keepers as being prepared to give him, though they were not? There are other questions too which it would take too much space to phrase. The passage is not perspicuous, and I have the idea that perspicuity on the logical surface is the indispensable condition of metaphysical poetry.

Further, I observe that in the second and third parts of this poem the metaphysical style is abandoned for other styles, which is poor tactic, or would be if the metaphysical style had been brilliantly achieved. There comes in the romantic superlative style of

> The yellow shrieking music of the heat,

and the romantic obscure style of

. . .dying fall
Of yellow sound in primal arrogance,

and the romantic heroic style of the conclusion, to which I have already referred. Perhaps my criticism is harsh. But the intellectual tone of metaphysical poetry is too high to compromise, no matter how well the poet's invention is working on other (and intellectually lower) planes.

This poet is not a good enough pedant to make a mock-pedant, and therefore to write a thoroughly metaphysical poem.

IV

In the poem "In the Delta, Remembering" we find a peculiar device: the interpolation of a choric or anonymous line once or twice,

But that is past in time.

It is effective in breaking up the too-controlled development of the poem-idea. The same thing on a larger scale we find in the longer "Elegy"; there are parenthesized italics, and italics out in the clear, presenting some bold exciting matter with incremental repetitions, from some source we cannot identify, though at times it seems to be the other self of the poet. The most obscure and not the least pregnant of these interpolations is,

if the voice of sound should not abide
if the voice of sound should not resound
if the voice of sound should not rejoice.

The poem is quite "made" by this device, but one is obliged to ask if the finest poem can be made in such a manner.

We have seen the like in other contemporary moderns; the last case I recall seeing was in one of the long poems of Mr. Warren's *Thirty-six Poems*. In a slightly different form it is the principal device, or the one responsible for most of the excitement, in Mr. Eliot's "The Waste Land": the abrupt forcing upon attention, which might be otherwise too placidly pursuing its directed imaginative tour, of materials very important and entirely uncoördinate with the given materials; yet with no visible allocation of the words to speakers.

This practice, if we are purists, hardly seems legal for the lyric, which is in essence a monologue. It is apparently a theft from drama. The Greeks

had their chorus, which took care of some of the regular "business" as a *dramatis persona*, but was really as much out of the business of the play as in; it had a fine irresponsibility therefore, and could ejaculate, fear, philosophize, have premonitions, and on the whole enrich the content of the scene beyond the point to which actors could have carried it.

Drama by itself, without a chorus, is an exercise in variety and complication, attaining them much more easily than lyric. In lyric all the content must come as a content of one mind. The one mind is likely to unify its content by too simple and narrow a logic, as in the sonnet of Shakespeare's above. For instance, it would be very difficult for one mind to render unassisted the full report which is rendered jointly in a certain drama by an enraged king, a fool, and a madman on a heath in a storm; these types of mentality are not coördinate. Yet the lyric poet would like to receive and focus them all in one act; he knows that they actually may impinge upon one mind collectively, and that it must receive their total intricate image; and the great fear which constantly besets him, if he is a modern poet, is that he shall not achieve rare and subtle unities at all, but cling like the "literary" poet to the easy and obvious ones. In this case it would be the experience, not of the three actors *seriatim*, but of the spectator of the play into whose consciousness the three actors enter. For the drama is less artful than the lyric, and does not really unite its own materials; it assembles them and lets the spectator unite them.

The sort of inclusiveness that is added unto the lyric by anonymous prophetic cries and whisperings is not exactly a step towards the real supremacy of lyric. These should stand not in the finished poem but in the poet's notes, as agenda, projects for assimilation.

V

How, then, is a modern to escape from Shakespeare, from the easy copiousness of the Elizabethans, from the oppressive intellectualism of the nineteenth century? Most recent and contemporary poets of course do not escape; they are not modern. Mr. O'Donnell escapes, and is of the general company to which Hart Crane belongs; Allen Tate; Robert Penn Warren; William Butler Yeats, very largely; Mark Van Doren, in his later and more interesting work; Wallace Stevens; Auden; Archibald Mac-

Leish, who escapes though not into a very systematic or substantive experience; T. S. Eliot, who escapes in all possible ways, which may not always be legitimate and for example by metaphysical poetry, dramatic devices, a high-powered literary allusiveness making his content formidable, and esoteric symbolism; and, here and there if not consistently, many others.

The regular escape is hard to define just because it is a very broad road that is to be traveled; it is in fact only a direction, and the points to be reached by traveling are not identifiable in advance. It requires of the poet such an assertion of the mind's integrity as is now marvelous in its rarity. The poet must find his way back to those whole states of mind in which the world is originally experienced, and from which every pure intellectual achievement had to take its start.

The effect gained is that of a world which may be amenable to reason, or it may not, we do not care; we are not yet committed to reason; it is the flush of the first dawn in Eden. It is impressive to readers who want poetry to lay claim to the whole of her kingdom and not only that part laid off in formal plots and traversed by rectilinear highways. This is the real world; the other is the reduced world which we come to later under a rationalizing and possessive bias. For the same world is experienced not once nor twice but many times. The last experience of it, ordinarily, is that of the determinate idealist or scientist, who sees it only as adapted to his very special prepossessions. All poetry of course is the record of vision recovered by imagination under the authority of memory. But the authority of reason is generally so preëmptive of the mind's attention that memory is relegated to the dark, or the unconscious, and the poet's intention becomes the intention of finding access to the unconscious. It takes a poet to find it.

Plato pictured reason as light, and the original state of mind as the darkness of a cave. Accordingly he felt that the poet was a criminal, inasmuch as he took the caveman whom Plato was leading steadily into the sunlight, and turned him back towards the cave's darkness. But Plato's figure is calculated, and entirely inept. It is rather as if in the cave the man had lived within a kaleidoscope of all brilliant colors, whereas Plato wants for some reason to condition him to receive exclusively the infra-red, and in leading him out robs him of more than he gives him; it is the poet

who restores his birthright. Or it is as if the man had lived originally among an infinity of individual forms, whereas Plato would have conducted him past a series of optical stations that his eyes might be fitted with glasses, one after the other, until finally he could perceive no forms except those of pure geometry. Euclid alone has looked on beauty bare? Euclid was a geometer, and in following his métier he was consenting to be practically blind.

Croce of course places art at the intuitive or pre-rational stage. I should accept this provided that he does not mean—as his illustrations would suggest—that this is the infantile stage. In mature poetry the mind which experiences the object does not surrender the edge of its intellectual discrimination. The mind intuits with its intellectual organs as well as with its sense organs, and indifferently. (They cannot indeed be quite sundered, from the point of view of a nice psychology; though in ordinary life, as man advances, the lion of intellect increases in appetite and wants to eat the lamb of sense.) In metaphysical poetry and in this modern poetry there is intellectual power though it is not used destructively.

I do not know how these poets manage unless it is by a very superior power residing in their will to know. They hold the object before their attention a long time, until the fugitive content—proscribed by intellect—comes back and fills it once more; less devoted poets hold the object under attention but a moment and take the first detail that comes.

I will quote from Mr. O'Donnell's poetry two or three passages which do not lend themselves easily to analysis; they have gone down a little deeper than that superficial world about which we generally have communications and where I do not understand them I respect them. First:

> The later light strikes blindly;
> Fall's reverberance dislikes
> Smells of the rainwashed vine
> Torn by the early wind, waxen by the window
> Where she sat to mend—of afternoons
> The sunlight-seeker for her mind.
>
> Trees were thin. And there no light
> But gray, and gray rebounds from blue;

But in the light no blue.
The gray of twilight, scarlet sounds
Of twilight; scarlet to gray
The sounds were all she knew.

And then:

What cunning architect secured the walls
Of Anding's house, left mine preyed on by mice?
A mage designed the conjure while we slept
To grave our shields with infamous device,
Rusted our arms that guiltless vampire swords
Must starve in desuetude: the while a pox
Grows fat upon our soldiers and we dream
Salvation from the bestial paradox.

This second one has more visible coherence than the first one; it has a deceptive show of polysyllabic rationality. The first one probably achieves a subtler though a more spontaneous and a simpler-looking unity. What is this unity? All five artistic moments tend to evade rational definition; that is, to evade simplification. The conscious effort of modern art is to transcend the synthetic or composed unity and to go where analysis cannot quite follow.

I might conclude with this one, and its tragic note of evil, which also is modernistic:

O whom have you now chosen for your bride
In spring, our Christ? The cedars spear your side
Upon the hillslopes where the snakes may coil
In fearful ambuscade amid the stones
Where no more sound may vex their vigilant bones.

SIX POETS:
A STUDY IN MAGNITUDES

Donald Davidson

THE TASK of doing justice to six individual poets in one critical discussion is confusing and difficult at best, and I rebel against it. Under what single consideration can they be brought together? Shall I say what school they belong to, what their "attitudes" are, or shall I indicate, by discussing the detail of their work and the qualities of their style, the shades of difference in their modernity? I find myself not wanting to "place" these poets. I am not much interested in their politics or economics or biography, and I cannot say much that has not already been said about the intricacies of modern style and technique. I find myself wondering, rather, why every slim volume of modern poetry stands so bravely and pathetically alone, belonging nowhere, it seems, except in a reviewer's column or on a very rare library shelf, and yet making poetic cause of its loneliness, as if it were the sole function of poetry, at last, to be unrelated to anything whatever. Why such little books? Why such a discreet, withdrawing, apologetic, self-critical appearance before the world, betrayed so often in a preface by the author or his friends?

The Hermaphrodite and Other Poems, by Samuel Loveman. The Caxton Printers, 1936. $2.00. *Selected Poems of Robert Nathan.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1935. $2.00. *Prolegomena to Any Future Poetry,* by Howard Blake. Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1936. $1.25. *Poems,* by Robert Fitzgerald. Arrow Editions, 1935. $2.00. *The Dog Beneath the Skin,* by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood. Random House, 1935. $1.50. *Solstice and Other Poems,* by Robinson Jeffers. Random House, 1935. $2.50.

Such questions give me a consideration, I think, not often mentioned nowadays, but very happily brought forward by Mr. F. Cudworth Flint, in the Winter Number of *The Southern Review*. Mr. Flint closed his discussion of five modern poets with a comment which I shall take as my text. For it indicates what is evidently a serious weakness of modern poetry and suggests the neglected source from which it might draw strength to repair its weakness. Mr. Flint said:

> They [the modern poets] give us excellent lyrics, excellent narratives, excellent meditations; but what our culture chiefly needs at present is an artistic focal point, a center of unity, more *formally* evident than can be supplied by a collection of short poems. We need a structure of life and art capable of appealing both to the simple and the learned. In other words, we not only need beliefs, of which we have almost too many (skepticism is a product of intellectual overcrowding); we need also a mythology, and a mythology credible, and capable of being embodied in poetry of *epic* magnitude.

From the context of his remarks it is evident that Mr. Flint accepts and in large measure admires the technical achievements of the modern poets; but he is disturbed, and rightly, that they should narrow their art as they do. He might well have gone further and pointed out that even the lyrics, narratives, and meditations lack a formal character. They are not really lyrics, narratives, and meditations, but merely "short poems." Under modern handling even so strict a lyric form as a sonnet, or so stereotyped a narrative form as the ballad, gets lost in the peculiar "effects" which the poet feels driven to seek. We not only do not have a peotry of "epic magnitude"; it is not of lyric magnitude, either. It is just poetry, informalized or deformed, and its mysterious differentiation from prose lies only in certain attitudes and in certain devices, used at will, anywhere, any time, with little or no question as to their appropriateness at a given point. Worse still, the poets (who are not, perhaps, to be blamed for the seriousness of their purpose) make the short poem all-inclusive. They try to squeeze "epic magnitude" into short compass. It is a real question whether the short poem will endure the strain.

The situation illustrates the last extremity of the dislocation at which modern poetry has arrived. The modern poet is not only dislocated from

his audience (from society, as has frequently been pointed out) and from the beliefs or myths on which he ought to be able to build (for the kind of belief that Mr. Flint puts under the head of "skeptical overcrowding" is not the belief that does poets any good), but he is dislocated, in one important sense, from his own art. He lacks a rhetoric which will tell him how and where to apply the forms and techniques now available to his use. We know a great deal about meter, diction, imagery, and the like; and we have a very highly developed aesthetic of irony and its place in poetry—as, for instance, the aesthetic so ably set forth by Mr. Cleanth Brooks in these pages recently. But we know next to nothing about how to suit a form to an occasion. Any form, or every form, has to do for any and every occasion. Or, with no guide but a notion that a unique occasion calls for a unique form, the poet invents his form as he goes, or twists a traditional form past all recognition. Since all occasions are unique, under the personal and egocentric view that dominates our art, the result is nothing short of anarchy. The skill of the poet is applied to the detail and the general effect; but only instinct, or ear, or typography, or some ungovernable and unpredictable daemon of poetry, dictates whether the poet will use a given meter or no meter, or will fit a definite or indefinite form to some particular exercise of his capacity as poet.

If we are going to consult the Elizabethans, who are now being so fruitfully reëxamined, we ought to consider that they were in no such confusion. Although they were less certain about the matter than their medieval precessors (for the bug of modernism had already begun to bite, even then), they tacitly accepted a rhetoric of application of the form to the occasion. The sonnet was a vehicle for amorous sentiment. The sonneteer might, incidentally, philosophize upon mortality or deliver personal comments on the universe, but he must do so within the frame of the convention which gave him occasion for using the sonnet form. And so, too, by and large, with other forms. They attached themselves significantly to deeds and uses, within the general culture of which they were an organic part, and did not suffer from aesthetic isolation. Lyric poetry was not yet literature, as it is with us, but it was song, to be sung on the stage or in private circles or communally, and it did not occur to the Elizabethan lyrist to publish lyrics as *books of poems*. Furthermore, in spite of their competence

in the lyric, the Elizabethans did not think of it as major poetry. Major poetry was dramatic and narrative poetry on the grand scale: an allegorical narrative, a play in verse (to be spoken rather than printed), or epic with a mythological and historical framework.

The short poem, or the lyric poem, did not become important until Donne charged it with heavier meaning than it had known before, and opened the way, I think, for the destruction of the lyric as song. But we should not think only of Donne, since his choice, even then, was only one possible choice. Shakespeare, with certain grave matter to communicate, chose dramatic verse, and Milton, neglecting the lyric form although he was adept in it, preferred the epic. If Shakespeare and Milton had had as little sense of form and occasion as we have, the tragedy of Hamlet would have been a matter of songs and sonnets, and the justification of God's ways to men would have been no more than the "tough reasonableness underneath the slight lyric grace" of some holy sonnet or some passionate bit of reasoning about a woman and an apple.

What destroyed this old sense of the form suited to the occasion and drove us to make great out of little? The advance of prose, Protestantism, individualism, romanticism, rationalism, science, industrialism—all of that, I suppose. Whatever may be the cause, there is no doubt about the process of destruction and its results. Poetry enjoyed great prestige as long as it found, in its various forms, a happy and proper application to some occasion that might be its external "use." The prestige lasted over for a long while into the time when poetry began to have implication, but no application, and had already become a matter of books and printing—a literary art, and *only* a literary art. And now that prestige is all worn out and gone. Poems have now no use except in books. They do not mean, but be. And people let them be. Nobody has any idea for what occasion any kind of poetry is appropriate, but Mr. Flint, who is not alone in his desire, calls for no-occasion to be replaced by large-occasion and plenty of it.

The one thing, therefore, which unites the group of volumes under consideration is that nobody can say precisely where and how their poems and their books attach to anything in the scheme of things we call modern life; and the poets themselves hardly lay claim to more than a literary

attachment, which we are likely to discover is also detachment. And if they differ, aside from certain broad differences of style and subject, it is in the degree to which they find application or occasion for their verse. For they do find occasion, a little, and I am interested to note the result upon their poetry.

Mr. Samuel Loveman's *The Hermaphrodite and Other Poems* appears with a preface of splendid compliment, at the end of which I find an appropriate signature: Benjamin De Casseres. "There is in this poem," writes Mr. De Casseres, "a magic as authentic as Keats and a contained and sustained lyrical frenzy for the *'Supreme Loveliness'* that sets it apart from all other poetic fads, fancies and transparent fakery that is yowled and yawped abroad as the 'Ultra Modern note.' . . . There is in his work the breath of Ineffable Beauty that soars and shudders and flashes and blazes in the souls of Spenser, Herrick, Marlowe, Keats, Swinburne, Baudelaire, Poe, and Verlaine."

With this quotation I feel that I have done almost my full critical duty to Mr. Loveman's poems. But I will add, in partial confirmation of Mr. De Casseres' remarks, that Mr. Loveman's book illustrates perfectly the idea current in the eighteen-nineties, that the only occasion for poetry is Beauty with a large *B*. His poetry belongs (with Mr. De Casseres) to the 'nineties, not to the nineteen-thirties. His long poem, "The Hermaphrodite," is not a narrative but a lyrical declamation in the manner of Swinburne or Wilde and has all the vague fervor that T. S. Eliot dislikes in nineteenth century verse. The "Other Poems" are impeccable and graceful, in the traditional sense, and also belong, in their wistfulness and nostalgia, to the beauty-worshipping phase of our poetry. But alack, so general an occasion as beauty is no occasion at all for poetry nowadays. The set of the times is quite against Mr. Loveman. We do not know what use to make of his talents, nor do we care to find out. We do not invite him to write a song for a play, which he might do very well. There is no "Hero and Leander" for him to write. But things are so arranged that he can publish a book, containing poems that slightly "date," with an angrily defensive preface by an admirer. No more. I do not feel comfortable about this.

The Selected Poems of Robert Nathan belongs, at a higher level, to much the same category as Mr. Loveman's book. Again we have the poetry of Beauty in sonnets and brief lyrics, all perfectly smooth and successful. It is mellow, mature, a bit philosophical, too, like some of Santayana's verse. When Mr. Nathan is not apostrophizing Beauty, or eulogizing Edna St. Vincent Millay ("Sister of beauty, cousin of delight"), or trying to reproduce the effects of music ("At the Symphony: Cesar Franck, D Minor") he can write good poetry—poetry that even a hard-bitten modern might admire, as in the verses "At a Jewish Grave":

There is a grave beneath the swell
Of some mean meadow in the west
For thee, for thee, O Israel,
There shalt thou find eternal rest,

And sorrow make more green the sod
About the curved and sullen mouth
That once in Canaan in its youth
Lifted a music up to God.

But the poems do not intend to accomplish very much. Mr. Nathan's major effort has gone into prose fiction, for which it seems there is occasion enough. The lesser estate of poetry in his mind and in the public mind is indicated, possibly, by the mere convention of titles. His novels are known by their names, but for the verse "Selected Poems" is good enough. In a foreword Mr. Nathan attempts to reassure us. "When I was young," he says, "I believed that music was song, and poetry music . . . The book is small, but in so far as it is able it sings. I have never believed that size and art were one . . . Within the walls of the sonnet, as in the body of the violin, there is room for everything." But Mr. Nathan is wrong. His songs are not singable. Poetry is not music. His publishers know very well there is not as much occasion for a sonnet as for a novel. If size does not matter, why is a novel necessarily longer than a page? Why did Mr. Nathan, whom the book-jacket describes as "a master of satiric fantasy," never find occasion to put his satiric fantasies into verse?

If we no longer accept the poet as the high-priest of Beauty, what of the poet who boldly and seriously makes experiment the occasion of his

verse? In a persuasive, if rather heavy-handed, preface to his *Prolegomena to Any Future Poetry,* Howard Blake states his position.

> Each poet believes himself original: either he has ventured to realize some hitherto unrealized facet of technical originality; or he has eclectically fused the aesthetics of predecessors, believing that his fusion effects something of value for the now and for that vague posterity; or he, to enrich the world, depends solely . . . on the extraordinary merit of his personality and his viewpoint.

Mr. Blake then enlightens us as to the field of his own experiment. His main interest is in a certain difference which he works out between metaphor and symbol. He has a doctrine of the poetical value of abstractions. He has a theory of diction: he wishes to "juxtapose words which, though rhetorically foreign, are, for me, contiguous in association and suggestion." He knows his poetry is "difficult," but he does not think it "obscure." He will risk possible loss of an audience; he believes in "relative catholicity of meaning in the separate word"; he does not insist that the meaning a reader gets from Mr. Blake's poem must be Mr. Blake's own personal meaning.

Here, then, is the familiar modern thing: personal poetry, symbolist poetry. Mr. Blake has affiliations with Eliot and Hart Crane, but he seems less interested than they in what the whole poem does with an idea or mood; he wants to dig into the inside works to see what goes on or what can be made to go on. His experimental metaphors pile up, therefore, like the decorations of Angkor:

> Always stone mouth of muscled metropole
> Collided with palm cockatoo or jay,
> Building each moment nervous mausoleums
> For sought myopia. Stab dithyramb
> Of munching frankfort stands. Kill hacking glare
> Of vitiating need, when orioles
> Would exorcise oiled stevedores and sketch
> Attenuated scents with etching notes.

This is a passage from Mr. Blake's "Prophecy Before Death." I think Mr. Blake is pronouncing a doom on modern civilization, and I like the subject, but the poem gets lost in the experiment with diction and metaphor.

Mr. Blake apparently does not realize that the great battle of diction and metaphor has already been fought and won. He wants to fight it all over again for himself. One must respect his valor, but regret so much waste motion. With the power over words that he has, it seems a shame that he cannot go on and use the words where his power will count. Here surely we cry out for the expansiveness of more specific purpose and larger frame. But the age, and the practice of his contemporaries who command his intellectual respect, command Mr. Blake to telescope all he has to say into brief compass—a few poems, a thin, thin volume! Significantly, I note that where the subject is religious and the frame already set, as in "Rorate Coeli Desuper," vocabulary tends to become an instrument rather than an end. Under a happier régime, let us say that Mr. Blake would find his occasion in writing some new hymns for persons of a reverential turn. The Lord knows—as apparently the Church does not—that we need new hymns, written by real poets.

With the poetry of Fitzgerald, Auden, and Jeffers, we enter a different field of possibility and achievement. In the poetry of Fitzgerald and Auden I can dimly perceive the makings of a poetry of "epic magnitude," and in Auden and Jeffers something like the shadow of a real occasion for poetry, in the way of application to a form which has a conceded status. Their superiority over the other poets here reviewed may be partly due to this factor.

Robert Fitzgerald's *Poems* is a first volume. It has the kind of distinction that younger poets growing up under the influences of the last ten years or so have schooled themselves to obtain. Mr. Fitzgerald has learned his lesson well and possibly has improved to some extent upon his masters. I do not think I have seen a better example of how the modern poet, in the rôle of a somewhat world-weary cosmopolitan, can assimilate widely separated experiences and symbols and make them part of the internal order of his poem. Here is the cool assumption, so common in modern verse, that the reader can make, with the author, cosmopolitan leaps from the Charles River to a religious ceremony in Mexico to the poetry of Catullus and on into anthropology and Freudian psychology. Short poems these are, a miscellany indeed, but brought into a general conformity of style, restrained, exact, impeccable, perfect of their kind. Mr. Fitzgerald manages far better

than Mr. Blake the modern inferential trick of "juxtaposing images rhetorically foreign." Perhaps he has a better ear. For example, his "Epithalamion":

> Lie down this evening. Firelight, western star
> Burn soft within your fêted-west; your mother's.
> The night of multitudes is still. O grave
> Angel of memory, tell our true distress,
> Whose love deep generations prison.
>
> A longer wind than on Catullus' eve
> Cooled the blinded king. World and world end
> Who is this woman now and who is he
> Who prays nightlong at her pitied lips?

But what unites these poems, other than unity of style? To what do they attach? The critics who hold that a poem must not mean but be ought to reflect what a fate is prepared for a fine poet like Mr. Fitzgerald. His poems are suspended in complete absolutism, like God, or, like the paintings in an art exhibit, for us to peer at as we jostle from one perfect absolute to the next. They make a book; the book is Mr. Fitzgerald's art gallery.

But there is more to say. Some of his poems are relative, in the sense that they imply conjunction with some larger being of which they seem to be the fragment or the preface. Although one detects here and there something of Mr. Archibald MacLeish's trick of making the descriptive phrase behave like a declaration, the poems at times have a noble and open manner of speaking—the magniloquence, perhaps, which Eliot scorns in Milton. I should cite "Night Images," "Manuscript with Illumination," or "First Movement," a long poem which ends the book, as examples. For quotation I choose—

THRENOS

> Always before the rain comes before the windows
> darkening in our house lengthen upon us
> between the time of reverence and withdrawal
> a clock's exquisite hands repose and wait

The suitors stirring in the hall sorrowful
tell of dead kings here is Odysseus dead

graven his bones and garments Sir I pray you
sleep in your vast dwelling sleep or sing now
cool voice cut in motion of the whole wind
sing no one will answer you the leaf invisible
falls on the tile the watchman sighs in the street

Always before the rain comes and the darkness
across the islands here in this granite light
holds the frail surface of the world together

here is Odysseus dead here is the night

Complete though the poem is as it stands, its idiom and cadence and its elevation seem to me not qualities of brevity but of extension. The accent is major, though subject and form are minor. To what occasion (better than this small volume of discreet and self-critical verse) can Mr. Fitzgerald turn his major accent?

For this review, the chief interest of *The Dog Beneath the Skin,* a play by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, is in the poetic choruses (presumably by Auden) interspersed as a commentary on the action. But the play itself deserves at least an outline. It might be called an inverted morality play, in which the Vices achieve a crushing triumph, though a foolish and empty one, over the Virtues. The Vices in general are people who represent the decadence of English society under modern civilization: an oleaginous Vicar, a pompous General, an Heiress (Miss Iris Crewe of Honeypot Hall); and, to fill out the action, a ruler who looks very much like a fascist leader; a world-financier; a too highly professionalized surgeon. The Virtues are sundry proletarians and hopeful youths, especially the hopeful youths who go forth from the village of Pressan Ambo on the yearly search for Sir Francis Crewe, the lost baronet, and who, if successful, are to receive as their reward the hand of Iris and one half of the Crewe estate. Between these two groups stand two journalists, impartial characters,

ubiquitous and all-knowing, who, like Messrs. Auden and Isherwood, have long since passed beyond good and evil. The action revolves about a young Englishman, Alan Norman, an eager and unspoiled youth. He stands, I suppose, for the upcoming younger generation, fated to pursue in vain the romantic quest in a civilization wrecked by the evil stupidity of the elders.

Alan's name is drawn as the young man chosen to go forth on the yearly quest (from which nobody has ever returned). The opening scenes are mock-romantic. They consist largely in parody, written in wicked doggerel, of the Gilbert-and-Sullivan or even the jazz-revue kind of thing. On the quest Alan takes with him a strange dog that has turned up at Pressan Ambo and that seems to have an unaccountable attachment to him. The dog is his almost-human, or all-too-human, companion in the succeeding episodes; like some modern artists, the dog drinks nothing but whiskey, neat; and he is always on hand at the critical moment. Together they wander through scenes that depict the extraordinary degradation of European society: they explore brothels, made on a Kraft-Ebing model; they turn up at a fascist "purge"—in which, too, the authors pay their satirical disrespects to authoritarian religion; they get into an insane asylum, a medical clinic, and a spa. At all points they encounter the defeated, the lost, the ruined. I know of nothing in modern literature that surpasses these scenes in relentlessness of satire, in sheer disillusionment and horror. They are not pleasant reading, and are not meant to be.

In the end the dog turns out to be Sir Francis himself, the lost baronet. He has chosen to escape from the world and from modern civilization by putting on a dog's skin and getting the complete low-down on humanity's present condition. In a way, the drama comes near to being a modern version of the Golden Ass of Apuleius. But though the play makes use of farce, it is neither farcial nor jocose. It ends in a heroical, I should say a romantic, solution. Francis denounces the Pressan Amboites to their faces and goes out, accompanied by Alan and a few others, "to be a unit in the army of the other side" (i. e., the Marxian choice).

Although *The Dog Beneath the Skin* may be "good theatre," I doubt whether it is a good play. Undoubtedly it is "propaganda," and communist propaganda at that. But here I am concerned only to see how Auden's

poetry, in the choruses, gains in power and meaning by its association with the dramatic form. In a book of selected poems his choruses (which, in effect, are able to stand alone) would still be interesting, but they would also remain, like most modern poems, somewhat mysterious in absoluteness. Here the poems borrow strength from the play, and the play from the poems. I do not mean that the writing of choruses, Greek style, will be the salvation of modern poetry. I do mean that it helps Mr. Auden's poetry to be fitted to an occasion. A little, perhaps, of the accent of a poetry of "epic magnitude" appears in such a passage as the following:

> Where time flows on as chalk stream clear
> And lovers by themselves forgiven
> The whole dream genuine, the charm mature
> Walk in the great and general light
> In their delight a part of heaven
> Its furniture and choir.

But I am afraid that Mr. Auden will never maintain this accent for more than a short passage. In this book, he rarely does. Always his choruses jangle and break in the end.

One man who ought to be capable of maintaining it is Robinson Jeffers. There is a broad epic purpose in everything he does. But is there epic magnitude? Perhaps there would be if Jeffers had ever bothered to subject himself to something like Miltonic discipline. What looks like epic magnitude in a Jeffers poem is too often only a roaring of words, which may be magniloquence in the bad sense. Is it Byron, or Whitman, or Jeremiah that leads Mr. Jeffers into mistaking bitter rhapsody for magnitude? The size is epic, the manner something less—probably lyric. Yet in the title poem of *Solstice and Other Poems* Mr. Jeffers does really apply a poetic method, on a grand scale, to a story that most writers would put into prose fiction. Although the story pursues Mr. Jeffers' old theme ("humanity is the mould to break away from"), and although we have here another study in nihilism and bloody murder, I take what comfort can be taken from the evident fact that Mr. Jeffers thinks the narrative form will do for one thing in poetry and the short poem for another. His short poems, or lyrics, are different; at least they attempt a different kind of thing. But the really important part of Mr. Jeffers' new book, I am inclined to

think, is "At the Birth of Age," a poetic drama based on an episode in the Niblung Saga. The curtness of the saga style, possibly, has worked nobly upon Jeffers' own diffuse style—except in the closing passages, which rant as wildly and vaguely as anything in "Prometheus Unbound." The old story of Gudrun's revenge upon her brother Gunnar, for the death of Sigurd, and her betrayal of Gunnar to Attila, has taken Jeffers a little apart from his preoccupations. He tells us in a brief preface that he is here concerned to show a critical point at which we can see the shift from pagan to Christian attitudes. It is a new thing in Jeffers to be rid for a moment of his pet theme, and the result is good. It ought to be a lesson to him and to all of us. But poets are wilful creatures. It will not be.

Although it may not be possible to concede epic magnitude to Mr. Jeffers, his example is worth the serious attention of all who may be tired, as Mr. Flint is, and as I certainly am, of our so careful hedging up of poetry into walled gardens of very private, never quite lyric, certainly not epic verse. We have brought the "short poem" to as fine a point of perfection as the eighteenth century brought the heroic couplet, and we are abusing it as badly. Mr. Jeffers at least dares to assume that poetry may have extension as well as tension. If he fails to achieve the epic vein, it may be because we neither know the occasion for the modern epic nor have a modern form for it. Do we have to wait for the "center of unity" and the "credible mythology" referred to by Mr. Flint, before we can deal with the problem? I do not think the problem, if it is a problem, is likely to be solved by the main strength and awkwardness of criticism. But there is always the poetic solution. It will lie in the performance of the poet who will first have the genius to find his occasion and use it.

NOTES ON THE NOVEL

R. P. Blackmur

THE TWENTY novels and two collections of short stories divide with convenient ease into approximately five classes, and it is with regard to those classes rather than to any order of merit that I have arranged the order of treatment given below. Their respective rank as works of the imagination will arrange itself, if at all. Some, indeed, are not works of imagination at all—are either mere communications about living or a presentation of an informative or argumentative burden; others only use the imaginative faculty by implication. Our great concern will be with the two classes where an attempt is made at an imaginative ordering or actualization of experience within the terms of art. The other classes will be dismissed as cleanly as possible with definition and recommendation, not because their interest or use is less, but because they show little material for literary criticism to fasten on.

The Son of Marietta, by Johan Fabricius. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. $3.00. *The Jew of Rome*, by Lion Feuchtwanger. New York: The Viking Press. $2.50. *The Stars Look Down*, by A. J. Cronin. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. $2.50. *The Sound Wagon*, by T. S. Stribling. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50. *It Can't Happen Here*, by Sinclair Lewis. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50. *The World With a Fence*, by Marian Sims. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co. $2.00. *After a Hundred Years*, by Ruth Eleanor McKee. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50. *The Hurricane*, by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. $2.50. *Banjo on My Knee*, by Harry Hamilton. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. $2.00.

Of the class furthest removed from specific criticism, we have three examples: *The Son of Marietta*, by Johan Fabricius, which is a full-blown historical romance, with picaresque trappings, of undifferentiated and unqualified action and spontaneous adventure in the Italian eighteenth century; *The Jew of Rome*, by Lion Feuchtwanger, which is part of the author's dramatized history of the Jews, realistic in historical perspective and circumstance, but communicating a historical pattern—here with philosophical subpatterns—rather than expressing or constructing the emotion of experience; and *The Stars Look Down*, by A. J. Cronin, which is a narrative of two families in the coal-mining north of England from the turn of the century to the rise of the National Government, where again the perspective is dramatic as it exemplifies history in particular lives rather than as it focuses experience in the felt lives of individuals. What these three works have in common is the informative interest—whether social or historical—of the material. Each of its type is excellent, and *The Jew of Rome* approaches mastery; none of them offers openings to the critic of imaginative form. In this class the limit of form is reached in the arrangement of information as related to viable characters, and that form, by long-standing convention, depends upon the interest of the material alone.

Of a second class, which is a little nearer to literary form in the sense that its examples attempt to persuade us of something—but by force rather than imagination, by argument rather than qualification—we have

Green Hills of Africa, by Ernest Hemingway. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.75. *Perish in their Pride*, by Henry de Montherlant. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50. *Stoker Bush*, by James Hanley. New York: The Macmillan Co. $2.50. *Mr. Aristotle*, by Ignazio Silone. New York: Robert M. McBride and Co. $2.00. *Butcher Bird*, by Reuben Davis. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. $2.50. *Innocent Summer*, by Frances Frost. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50. *Men and Brethren*, by James Gould Cozzens. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. $2.50. *King Coffin*, by Conrad Aiken. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50. *From Death to Morning*, by Thomas Wolfe. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50. *Flamethrowers*, by Gordon Friesen. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. $3.50. *The Foxes*, by R. P. Harriss. Boston: The Houghton Mifflin Co. $2.50. *The Root and the Flower*, by L. H. Myers. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. $3.00. *The Last Puritan*, by George Santayana. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.75.

two pairs. T. S. Stribling's *The Sound Wagon* persuades us by a one-sided account, garnished by fact, humor, caricature, and ferocity, of the fundamental corruption of American politics under the twin control of the corporations and the racketeers; and Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here* persuades the American Liberal that he must rise to action from his long dilemma of quiescence in order to destroy, before it occurs, the fascist terror which Mr. Lewis envisages with hateful care. The lessons of both authors are worth learning, because vivid, pertinent, and eloquently taught; but in learning the lessons nothing is added to our understanding of human character or of the basic American scene through which the lessons must react. My second pair perhaps make a subclass of their own, but as they exhibit a fundamentally similar attitude towards the use of the novel, showing, in effect, abstractions of character in relation to a society abstractly conceived, the advantage of comparison by natural parallelism is gained by considering them here. Both *The World with a Fence*, by Marian Sims, and *After a Hundred Years*, by Ruth Eleanor McKee, show their characters in the attempt to find a *formula* for self-realization, and both authors identify without proving their characters as superior people —which is the height of abstraction. Hence an egocentric snobbery provides the point of view and chooses the incidents. Both books have the speed—and the wastes sped over—of what does not stop to feel, but they lack the momentum of that sensibility which never stops feeling. The language used in all four books—and here is their common ground in sensibility—is that which indicates or communicates attitudes: never the language that produces and controls attitudes. The difference between the two pair is in intellectual stature, not in depth of actualizing imagination.

A third class, which reaches the condition of literature by exemplifying its basis or rudiment in narrative, is shown here by Messrs. Nordhoff and Hall's *The Hurricane* and by Harry Hamilton's *Banjo on my Knee*, the first excellent for the rising pitch of its excitement and the external vividness of its descriptive narrative, and the second welcome for light reading because amusing and bizarre and quotidian. But there seems to me no point in the many reviews that make *The Hurricane* a masterpiece outside its own limit. What effectually prevents it from being great literature is that the terrible events related happen less to the personages in the book

than safely in the reader's mind; narrative in the first person can never do more without the imposed medium of a great poetic style. It is better to take *The Hurricane* for what it is, a yarn, a first-rate story any one might tell. That it keeps the limit of its class is for it rather than against it: its emphasis is laid on the event and not on the feeling of it, which, however, is the reverse of the emphasis of great literature.

We come now to the two classes where the reverse emphasis is meant to be dominant, whether by implication or presentation. One group is composed of books by those writers whose creative faculty is the post-War, barbarous, or nonrational imagination bent upon securing the impact of event and action as felt aesthetically for themselves, and whose technique is largely limited to rendering every effect and every value in its immediate aspect. The second group includes books by all those writers, presided upon by the rational imagination, who bring, or attempt to bring, the ultimate values of experience through varying perspectives of form and order to the felt condition of the actual rather than the merely immediate. As the first method is a short cut, in intention, to the ends of the second, and indeed a criticism of it, we shall examine the first group first, and briefly.

Mr. Hemingway and M. de Montherlant present two extremes of the type. *Green Hills of Africa* is a vivid, cleanly written account of hunting big game in Africa. Only the careful provision of a participating consciousness and the persuasiveness with which its theme of the active life is enacted raise it from the condition of a rambling yarn and make it, despite its autobiographical material, both a composed fiction and a gospel of action. If it is a pointless fiction and blind gospel it is because, by the simple distortion of the medicine of hardship into a sacrament of salvation, the action it celebrates absorbs point and extinguishes light. *Perish in Their Pride* is M. de Montherlant's version of the stupidity of inane inaction from which Mr. Hemingway's positive action provides the illusion of escape. I cannot see but what the ensuing darkness is the same, whether it be taken as a mercy or an ecstasy. But that is not the right emphasis to place upon *Perish in Their Pride* as a work of fiction. What is important is that M. de Montherlant leads his three decayed Frenchmen, his rotting aristocrats, through the ravages of stupidity and inanity to the terminal point of death for one,

notably the youngest, without ever allowing any of them to make or even to *feel* an adequate response to the life around them. The author is a victim of the apathetic fallacy, and it is as he applies it to the sensibilities of his characters that they become repulsive collections of fetishes rather than horrible and pathetic as their analogues are in Dostoieffsky.

Stoker Bush, by James Hanley, has an advantage over both Mr. Hemingway and M. de Montherlant in resorting to a formal plot—a rounded sequence of adultery, discovery, and retribution; but he loses most of his advantage by the inarticulate medium in which his particulars are presented. The positive contribution of the plot, aside from the valuable tying-in of its suspense, is that it makes what is merely local color in his colleagues seem more nearly, as the painters say, color in light and air: unity and consistency of atmosphere. Between the extremes of action and inanity, Mr. Hanley's book is exciting, veracious, and intensely apprehended in terms of the bare materials of emotion, but it fails to come off, I think, because only the atmosphere and not the values of his people are focused by the plot. It is worth noting that all three authors resort at critical junctures to the releasing device of the lyric outburst, Mr. Hemingway in a beautiful prayer to his wife, M. de Montherlant in his metaphor of wild geese and dying at the death of his protagonist, and Mr. Hanley in a sudden, free, and confused description of a storm and wreck at sea—all three passages being wholly inconsistent in mode and tone with the technical structure of their respective books.

Ignazio Silone in his collection of stories, *Mr. Aristotle,* makes no such defection. His portraits of peasant stupidity and violence and superstition, whether under the impact of the fascist terror or not, have a roundness of feeling and a fullness of emotional implication all the more powerful because secured with the economy of bare statement. His peasants may be stupid in all they have to offer on the surface, but their stupidity has an air of participation in, at a deep, blind level of consciousness, all the feeling and understanding of their own meaning which a more articulate sensibility could avow for them. As Kenneth Burke once observed of Erskine Caldwell, Signor Silone indicates so well what he has left out—the humanity, the sentiment—that the reader knows exactly what to put in. These indications, these small lacunae, perhaps constitute an implied form

in themselves, and as near a positive or rational form as authors may come who refuse to posit a full intelligence at the heart of sensibility.

There is more, of course, to say of each of these authors, more to demonstrate the unfailing responsibility of each at the periphery of his work, and more to explain the necessary defect of irresponsibility at the center; and it is an injustice to explain one without demonstrating the other. There is an element in every sensibility for which the periphery of things is often enough, which is a prudent and an aesthetic element as well as self-deluding and inconsolable. Let us say rashly, omitting all the rest, that where the only principle of control is peripheral, then, at the center—both of the works provided and of the reader's response to them—private and uncontrolled, unrealised emotions will creep in, and the value of your implications, if you have them, will be out of kilter. That is like life, confused; but a rational art is meant to improve it with the conscious illusion of form.

In turning now to our last group, we have in Reuben Davis' first novel, *Butcher Bird,* a natural transition from the nonrational to the rational imagination. We have a powerful but forced plot as in *Stoker Bush,* we have a superficial stupidity covering an animal intelligence as in *Mr. Aristotle,* and we have a good deal of apathetic or callous brutality as in *Green Hills of Africa* and *Perish in Their Pride.* But the differences are as marked as the resemblances. The plot lifts and gives the forward stress of life in suspense to the characters so that they contribute as well as suffer the action. The stupidity of surface is made to reveal, and not merely to imply, the suffusing animal intelligence beneath, and the device of exhibition is the irrefutable one of the spoken, idiomatic phrase, which in a novel accomplishes what gesture does on the stage. And the apathetic brutality is superficial, given for excitement and contrast, and does not drive the story: it is local colour in the good sense. Which is to say that every element is subordinate and contributes to the rational intelligence—in this case the omniscient author's—that presides upon the whole. The result is that Mr. Davis' negro share-croppers and their tale of love and labor, murder and fraud, will and sacrifice, are what is called *authentic,* presented as felt in every relevant aspect. Their actions are felt as rising out of their lives and their feelings are the equivalent of the action. But I should praise Mr. Davis too

much and be unjust to the authors with whom I am comparing him if I did not add two qualifying facts: *Butcher Bird* is successful but slight, and the slightness, but not the success, depends on a too facile use of the stock conventions of the novel. The success is in the only promise worth noting, a measure of achievement. Magnitude, that is hoped for, comes only with a completely realized technique, and what matures in a rational imagination is exactly that technique.

Of Miss Frost's *Innocent Summer* what is at once plain is that it is built, like *The Waves* of Virginia Woolf, on the serial presentation of the parallel consciousnesses of half a dozen children aged five to fifteen. The parallels are meant to multiply at the same time that they focus. The product is the related action of the different children both as they perceive it themselves and as, from a detached and more nearly omniscient vantage, the reader sees it in wider implication. What is focused, seen magnified or made small, is the theme: the solid of emotion which is the novel's response to the growing up of these children in terms of the natural, if critically chosen, events of a single summer.

The device of the innocent sensibility as a freshener of experience and a purifier of judgment is a sound and, when adequately adhered to, a liberating device for any novelist. We have examples in James, Dostoieffsky, Gide, and Mann, and with a variety that might make adequacy seem prospectively omniform. Miss Frost's example shows that it is not; there is a limit to what the innocent sensibility will bear in itself and a cognate limit to what the reader will bear from it. The limit is indefinable, but it may be felt as transgressed when the *terms* in which the innocent sensibility is shown are richened or stretched beyond the powers of the sensibility itself. It is a matter of credibility and of the technique for securing it. Miss Frost's children are sometimes incredible, not for what they see and feel and know, but because the language of their minds, the terms of their knowledge, shows them as knowing too much *what* they know. The poetry of seeing, which ought to be the reader's, is too often substituted for the poetry of what is seen. The charm of the child's mind, at least in fiction, is that it knows and at the same time does not know. That is, the force of naïveté is always the force of experience taken as its own meaning, and this is true equally whether the experience is sensual, of a death, or intellectual, of an

idea. Put positively, for the novelist, the rule of the innocent sensibility is this: it is capable of receiving and responding to any experience whatever, and the novelist may present it with as much experience as he can find perceptive terms for; but it is incapable, in the degree that it *is* innocent, of perceptive terms for the typical, the general, the stale, or the in-any-way sophisticated, because—and this is its greatest advantage as a mirror—to it the stalest experience will not only seem fresh but will *be* fresh, and to present it otherwise is not to present it at all.

If Miss Frost fails sometimes in constant freshness and falls into the stale and incredible, it is only partly because she transgresses the limits of what the innocent sensibility will render as credible. There is also the inherent difficulty of employing at the same time the contrasting modes of the innocent sensibility and the stream of consciousness, a combination which requires a great technical mastery to effect. Miss Frost writes with authority but not with mastery; but her comparative failure comes primarily from the only spring of ultimate success: a sensibility possessed by the forward stress towards persuasive form. That her failure is technical only shows how much she has to fail from. Meanwhile *Innocent Summer* is superior in every realm of value to work which merely passes as competent.

It is not superior to the competence which characterizes James Gould Cozzens' *Men and Brethren;* a competence which includes a prudent mastery, and of which nothing could be asked except, superrogatively, a greater magnitude. Although we can say that Miss Frost fails in the management of a great theme through the immaturity of her formal technique, we cannot say anything of the sort about Mr. Cozzens' book. His management is excellent and his theme far from small: the theme of what life does to a man who has already matured in a special way, here an episcopal clergyman limited by the special strength and weakness of the intelligence that brought him into the Church. As Miss Frost employs the innocent sensibility Mr. Cozzens employs what is no less the device of the informed sensibility; and as Miss Frost presents her pure souls with the shock of life in a Vermont village and made a summer's picture, Mr. Cozzens presents the Reverend Ernest Cudlipp with the shock of the terrible business of the Church in this world, and makes, I think, a day's destruction of it. No novelist could ask more for theme and situation and circumambient natural

interest; and, with so much given to begin on, few novelists could do more than Mr. Cozzens in the way of excitement, compactness, and the achieved air of momentum. Where the book falls short is not, in any ordinary sense, in its technique; as an essay in rational art it is everywhere in control of itself and establishes its own relative proportions and balances. Its concessions to melodrama—the coincidence, the packing of events into a single day which might have been expected to occur in a term of years—are heightened and made good by the sophisticated intelligence of Cudlipp and by the invoked power of the Church. Furthermore, the sensibility of the book itself, as distinguished from Cudlipp's sensibility, is remarkably civilized—equable and self-consistent—yet a prevailing witness of other lives, other sensibilities, to make up a whole.

And it is this civilized, this ironic, sensibility that sets the tone and contributes the novel's final nub of meaning; it is this that gives the equivocal answer to the question implied in the title: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and suggests analogues for any transposition the reader cares to make. Hence, when Cudlipp resorts to the lesser evil by procuring an abortion to save a marriage and a family, or when, in the end, he fails his friend Carl by resorting to the higher good, which happened to be his own worldly good, we have the same predicament exposed. Which drove him, in either case, his own weakness or the essential strength *and* weakness of his faith? The answer, in a novel, has no need to pass the equivocal, which is the realm of felt value—of life as lived by those aware of it; but it needs to reach that realm and be felt there, and felt by the person concerned. Cudlipp is not raised to that eminence; he is exposed to his predicament but is not made to feel enough of it; and that is the radical lack of the book, the dissatisfaction no reader who envisages it can supply. I think, granting Mr. Cozzens the will, the sensibility, and the craft, that the remedy is yet technical after all. Cudlipp is an example of the normal in his métier, and his predicament is normal; but for that normality to be driven home it must be shown as eminent, as towering, and, perhaps, as obsessive; and there is nothing on earth to show it so, finally, but the persuasive power of language, language made equal in actuality to the feelings involved. In the novel, in the art of words, every economy and every expense of structure and conception is validated, if at all, in the particular words that render

them. I think, then, that if towards the end of his book Mr. Cozzens took more care of the words for Mr. Cudlipp's feelings, Mr. Cudlipp might turn out to be eminent after all.

If Mr. Cozzens' *Men and Brethren* is a case of the normal that fails of nothing but eminence, Conrad Aiken's *King Coffin* gives the opposite example: an eminent case of the abnormal where the failure, if there is one, is the very mark of success: which is to say that the book is a *tour de force* of the abnormal parading as the normal but nowhere subject to any normal appreciation except the reader's. What we have for the abnormality is the adventure of a man with an overweening need to commit himself, identify himself, realise himself absolutely, and who can only do so by killing a stranger. As his own vision of the decision, the choice, and the pursuit is unfolded, there is a hovering, a heightening, a shrinking; and when the act is performed it becomes, rightly, suicide. When you look into the abyss the abyss rises within you. That is the theme and the story; and the quality of the elaboration depends upon the fact that everything is seen directly through the consciousness of the protagonist, which is an abnormal, a diseased, an insane consciousness, scrupulous and proud of its own abnormality. We have the abnormal seen as an eminent case of the normal; and the effect is strengthened by making the normal view, as the protagonist catches it in his secret reading of his neighbor's diary, preposterous, irrelevant, intrusive, and horrible, an object of suspicion and mounting fear. Thus Henry James' rule for the rendering of evil is reversed; instead of giving us a normal perception of evil—except in the hints in the diary—Mr. Aiken gives us an abnormal perception of the normal. But at the same time James' rule is proved equal to the demands of the *tour de force* as well as to the demands of the straight novel; the object as well as the rule is here reversed; for the success of Mr. Aiken's story depends exactly upon the degree in which the abnormal does strike, *for the moment,* with the ring and value of what we take to be the normal, and vice versa.

How to value such a work will remain a problem only to those who are devotees of the fine game of literary precedence. Admitting that it belongs in a special compartment, one ought to be able to take it for what it is—the imaginative exercise of a dramatic possibility based upon the conventional melodrama of modern psychology, in short a legitimate, because

persuasive, *tour de force*. But as many will refuse so simple a salute, I want to make one or two further distinctions. It should be insisted that the book itself is sane and everywhere alert to the responsibilities of the rational artist, and it is only by the seductive slight of art that the reader is made to feel otherwise. The value of that sanity and the scope of that rational responsibility may be felt most obviously in connection with works which are helpless, at bottom, because without their governance: e.g., Thomas Wolfe's *From Death to Morning* and Gordon Friesen's *Flamethrowers*, both ailing overgrowths of superabundant sensibility.

Both these authors take their material from experience felt at hysterical intensity, and as their works develop, the hysteria replaces and obscures instead of mirroring and controlling the experience. The subjects of both are the stupid, the distraught, the oppressed; and Mr. Wolfe with his greater talent and better knowledge merely expresses those qualities at their own level with more lyrical fervor than Mr. Friesen can muster. Mr. Friesen is a worse, because a more barbarous, Wolfe: both are equally guilty of the heresy of expressive form: the belief, held to exaggeration, that life best expresses itself in art by duplicating its own confusion in the transferred form of the *spectator's* emotion. Write what you see, whatever it is, and say what you feel or ought to feel, and the thing will make itself a work of art. That most writing on this rule, not wholly turgid, is autobiographical, is the first clue to its insufficience. The fundamental insufficience, however, is in the lack of sanity in the presiding form and the absence of a rational point of view. Returning, for our point, to Mr. Aiken's book: its hero, Jasper Ammen, might be as stupid, distraught, and oppressed as any creature of Mr. Wolfe or Mr. Friesen, and as a matter of fact, on his own *intellectual* level, he is. Form, we might say, is the only sanity—the only principle of balanced response—possible to art: as lyric form will make the right nonsense into poetry; and to force your material—which is to say to condense, to elaborate, to foreshorten and give perspective and direction—into your chosen form so as to express it primarily by actualizing it—that is the minimum of your rational responsibility. You may do more if you wish; your work may come to an ideal vision like Santayana's *Last Puritan* or *Gulliver's Travels;* but if you do less, you will not have written a respon-

sible fiction; you will have expressed, not your subject, but yourself and more or less waste matter of emotion besides.

We do not need to resort to the special example of Mr. Aiken's *tour de force* for sane form; there is another, no less special, example from which the same counsel flows. This is *The Foxes,* by R. P. Harriss, which is on the surface the straightforward, zesty tale of the life of a fox in the fox-hunting Carolinas, with human interludes of trapping, hunting, rat-killing, cock-fighting, drinking, and botanizing at convenient intervals. Following no set rule of structure or point of view, resorting to the pathetic fallacy (with the foxes), the hard-boiled or apathetic fallacy (securing emotion by being unemotional about brutality), and occasional rhapsodic enthusiasm for detail (as in the naming of the dogs), the book nevertheless escapes the character of serial sketches and conspires to produce a fictional center, a sensibility of its own, within itself and among its parts. It has a unity which is organic and which acts half by implication and half by the charm through which it is alone visible, but which, once perceived, acts back upon the whole of the book, illuminating and refining the duplicity of its purpose.

I do not know how this effect is secured any more than I can exactly define its under-purpose. Perhaps the chief means are a constant loving treatment of detail and action, the unifying force of an attentive personality, and the resulting fresh persuasiveness of the language. Perhaps the ulterior purpose so illuminated is only pictorial: that the reader may come away with all the moving elements of a picture of the whole terrain, human and animal and topographical, sinking back into a new wild, a wild stigmatized and pathetic because feral, all second growth and nothing primeval. The purpose may be more, or less, and may show different perspectives for different readers. Whatever it is, it is secured by the clean economy of the selected material and by the controlled intensity with which it is presented. The book is a mirror and its life is in the image shown there. The weakness of Mr. Harriss, if he has one, is, like Mr. Aiken's, negative rather than, like Mr. Wolfe's, positive and overwhelming. In the sense that it requires a special surrender, a special delimitation, of expectation, *The Foxes* is, like *King Coffin,* a *tour de force*: it is an example, perhaps, of unusual material made to parade as eminent, a fact which makes it, as it is, successful minor art, excelling but slight.

At another extreme, both of intention and sensibility—and the art of the novel is prodigious in the number and quality of the extremes it provides—there is L. H. Myers' trilogy, *The Root and the Flower*. Addressed avowedly to readers in the modern predicament, it states its theme of the moral sensibility on the spiritual plane, and the twin theme of character-discrimination on the social plane—in terms conscientiously removed as far as possible from the social, economic, political, and religious predicament of his audience. The action takes place in sixteenth-century India and its movement is governed by various intrigues concerning the succession to the throne of Akbar, the great emperor, with the intention that the significance of the work will be all the more clearly felt in the Western twentieth century because divorced from false issues and local spiritual vulgarity.

I do not think that the device works except against its purpose, and its use raises one of the great problems of the novel: the use of external action and the form it ought to take. It is in this case easier to recognize the nub of discussion because the action fails. The clear result of Mr. Myers' device is that his action counts chiefly as a frame. What happens, what is done, what eventuates, matters only as it helps us to envisage, to see as of concrete origin, what the characters think and feel and say apart from the action that may or may not have inspired them. I do not think Mr. Myers realizes the burden he has chosen for his prose to carry: which is the burden of making a great proportion of his words *tell* in and for themselves as separable, quotable, self-complete items of expression. Put the other way round, Mr. Myers is nowhere able to resort to the great advantages of plot, which are roundness in appearance, solidity of impact, the illusion of objectivity, and—here the greatest advantage—the releasing or precipitating force of psychological form. This last is emphatically the great advantage of plot in works like *The Root and the Flower* which mean to mirror or represent the ultimate conflicts of the spirit in relation both to God and the world; and the advantage consists in this, that the words released or precipitated by the crises of the plot will, however ordinary in themselves, gather from the plot an extraordinary or maximum force of meaning which will in turn suffuse and heighten qualities of meaning differently arrived at—e.g., "The rest is silence."

It is the *system* of the *Divine Comedy* as it is the melodrama in *Hamlet* which precipitates and actualizes the great lines and passages we keep for value. Plot is the idiom, the special qualifying twist of action, and the writer who does not use it to the maximum tolerable degree fails to use the one dependable objective principle of composition. Mr. Myers in this case, in my judgment, has made that failure; his book has plot, but only for convenience in arranging movement and to provide the ornament of intrigue; it is all subplot and no major plot. Without a plot he depends for composition and forward stress upon the momentum of his theme, and for suspense and crisis upon the elaboration of debate. Which is to say that he depends upon the presentation of detail only thematically related, upon what, in short, is academically called *style*. The result is—to choose a few aspects from many—that the characters are superbly characterized, but never presented; their conflicts are profoundly envisaged, but seldom felt or understood; their debates and meditations are ably summarized and beautifully quoted, but seldom dramatized. The whole work seems somehow at the remove of comment, a chorus of apothegm. It is a novel everywhere acutely and nobly *about* its theme without ever becoming its representative equivalent. I do not say that if Mr. Myers had resorted to a fundamental invigorating and predicting plot, he would necessarily have achieved a deeper intention. Plot offers privations some cannot endure. I say only that plot would have offered a dependable opportunity to dramatize and enact, here not offered nor otherwise won.

But plot may not be the only mode of major composition. If plot is the idiom of action, the very articulation of the felt form of movement, surely there may be occasional perspectives where the plot needs no conscious formulation, so deep-seated and habitual may our consciousness of it be. *The Magic Mountain* is an eminent example of major composition without benefit of a major plot, where we have, topping all subplots, both the simple sequence of a life and the organic process of a disease contributing a sense of form altogether adequate to the greatest burden Mann could put upon it.

If I bring up a great novel here it is not to belittle *The Root and the Flower,* but to make room for George Santayana's *The Last Puritan,* which if it has a form at all—form in the sense of prevailing, animating struc-

ture—has form by the juncture in its center of a life-sequence not even complete and the felt organic process of an incomplete but profound imaginative insight—here called *puritanism*. It is only by conceiving the form on such a pattern and by construing the subject or narrative as flowing from it and depending upon it that we can consider the book rightly as a novel. We had otherwise better call it a "Soliloquy on America," containing dialogues, apologues, descriptions, and commentaries. Certainly if we look for any of the contributory achievements and graces of the ordinary novel, we shall be disappointed with what we find. The characters are not well drawn in their externals, are thin in their blood, and are wholly inadequate in the expression of the stock personal emotions. The narrative lacks sweep, and events do not sustain each other on the wing. Where most novelists would have worked a scene for all it was worth, Mr. Santayana either dodges it altogether or stops it short with a sermon, a meditation, or a note. On the supporting side, the transitions are for the most part merely gaps, the atmosphere is never completely localized and is usually given in terms of comparisons, judgments, and evaluations. Of the devices not integral to the theme of a novel but necessary to keep it rolling, those Mr. Santayana chooses are not well oiled and silent as good wheels should be, but creak awkwardly as they do in real life.

Mr. Santayana, in short, is not a novelist, not one of the craft; yet he has written a novel. *The Last Puritan*—to come to the point—succeeds to the status of a novel by building upon its substantial form in two directions. It composes a memoir of American life through its complementary intellectual portraits of Peter and Oliver Alden, and these portraits, in turn, are made the double focus to image the type of American society—the final stiff strawflower of New England Puritanism—which produced them. The radical weakness of each character is identical: the weakness of the puritan heritage in its final form, its incapacity to actualize life without decimating it. Each character realizes that weakness in himself, and that realization gives them their tragic strength and perspective. Each is an extreme of the type and knows the agony of extreme self-consciousness. Each has "a moral nature burdened and over-strung, and a critical faculty fearless but helplessly subjective." It is the scruple of the subjective conscience that decimates the life it realizes; hence Peter, the father, in attempting to be

unscrupulous, in attempting vice, luxury, and waste, only finds his scruple weary but no less active, and his achieved waste fatal; and hence too, the son Peter, taking the other path, knowing his cruple false, follows it the more intensely, doing everywhere the duty he despises, and in the end "wanders off again into the mist, empty-handed and puzzle-headed," morally self-slain.

Such is the intellectual direction the book takes, and its success in that direction is enough to make a profound critical appreciation of its chosen version of American life. What makes it a novel, a major example of imaginative dramatization, is its success in treating the same material in the opposite direction: the direction of poetic expression. Every important character in the book is given speech of inspired clairvoyance with which to crown and satisfy the needs of his being. The circumstance and the need are of the character, the inspiration is that of the book's material acting upon itself, but the clairvoyance springs from the language of moral philosophy raised to the level of absolute or dramatic poetry. That is the great technical feat of the book and the measure of its imaginative performance. The idiom, the fresh and indestructible sign of imagined characters, is here not in action nor in the felt quality of experience directly; it is, by the illusion of clairvoyance, translated or absorbed into the idiom of dramatic, re-creative philosophy: which is an absolute idiom of poetry. An excellent example for reference, because self-complete, is Mr. Darnley's sermon at the unexpected sight of his son, Jim, and Peter Alden coming into church.

It may be noted, finally, that in giving an objective, independent form to the inspirations of his characters, in most cases far beyond their practical capacities of expression, Mr. Santayana merely restores to the novel an ancient prerogative of poetry. "I have made you all speak the lingo natural to myself," he writes, "as Homer made all his heroes talk in Ionian hexameters. Fiction is poetry, poetry is inspiration, and every word should come from the poet's heart, not out of the mouths of other people . . . Even in the simplest of us passion and temperament have a rich potential rhetoric that never finds utterance; and all the resources of a poet's language are requisite to convey not what his personages would have been likely to say, but what they were really feeling."

SHORTER REVIEWS

The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England, by Samuel H. Monk. New York: Modern Language Association of America. $2.50.

Mark Van Doren

MR. MONK has written a story for scholars to read, but it should be read by critics and poets too, and indeed by all those persons who at any given time are interested in the relation between æsthetics and art, between theories of poetry and poetry itself. Mr. Monk, indeed, seems to keep his eye quite as much on the critic as on the scholar; for it is to the former that he persistently apologizes for being dull. He is not dull. His story may be, since it involves a great deal of necessary repetition. But he himself writes excellently; is a sensible and imaginative student of literature; and is never blind to the broadest meanings of his subject.

His subject, to put it all too briefly, is the effort made by British criticism over an astonishingly long period, the period between Boileau and Wordsworth, to define a certain quality which it found lacking in literature and which it wanted to restore. The quality in question is almost as difficult to define now as it was then, and Mr. Monk quite wisely leaves the full meaning of "sublime" or "sublimity" to emerge from the various quotations and synopses provided by his text. Suffice it to say that the quality *was* lacking in literature; that criticism tried to bring it back; that it took a hundred years to do so, if it ever did it at all; and that during this hundred years there were a great many failures, both on the part of the critics to understand their theory and on the part of the poets to apply it.

Ossian was on the whole neither better nor worse than the intellectual effort which brought it forth.

The moral of Mr. Monk's story is to me as plain as the nose on Vathek's face. Stated very generally, it has an important application to our own time; to our criticism and to our poetry. It is this. What criticism wants poetry to be, and what poetry as a result wants consciously to be, it cannot be. The eighteenth century named, but merely named, the quality it desired, as in these latter days we name the quality of order. Critics, and indeed poets themselves, go busily about demanding an ordered art. But we are never that which we know. Or to put it another way, the thing we desire is by definition the thing we do not have. And so I am sure that we shall never have the thing called order until we have begun to talk about something else—perhaps disorder, though by no means necessarily that. Mr. Monk makes the point with perfect clearness in his remarks about Milton. Milton did not read Longinus' *On the Sublime* for the simple reason that he did not need to; he was already sublime, and in fact could be nothing else. A century of poets who could be and were everything else under the sun spent their breath, nevertheless, in celebration of this bright particular virtue. Whether Wordsworth achieved it at last because of what so many predecessors had thought is another question, which would require another book. I suspect he did not. I suspect that the time had come, for whatever reasons, when the thing was not only possible but easy, and indeed unavoidable. Genius of any kind, Pope's or Wordsworth's, does not come because we call it. All at once it is obviously there.

Europa, by Robert Briffault. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.75.

Eleanor Carroll Chilton

For several months *Europa* has been on the best-seller lists; so it would be irrelevant to say that it is not good enough to be a best-seller. People tend to buy what they want, and the problem of overpraising meretricious books in order to make the public *think* it wants them is secondary because the

critics and reviewers are part of the reading public and their praise is doubtless genuine. Anyone who writes a best-seller has, presumably, given readers what they want, and thereby merits critical examination. What the public wants—in goods, in manners, in morals and a way of life—is, after all, the crux of every unsolved problem of democracy.

The publishers' blurb on the jacket of *Europa* was echoed by an astonishing number of responsible reviewers: "To read this novel is to stand on a mountain top and watch the kings, the captains, the mighty men and the lovely women of a vanished world go by into darkness—and to catch the first gleams of a rising sun." Now the number of readers who really care for sad meditation on a mountain top is comparatively small, but the paragraph preceding the one just quoted balances the prospect of a too-rarified experience: "Against an almost blindingly vivid and detailed background of pre-War life in London, St. Petersburg, Paris, Rome and the Côte d'Azur, Mr. Briffault sets the story of Julian Bern . . . It is through his eyes, and those of the beautiful Zena, Princess Hurzof, and her *coroneted companions,* that the reader views a spectacle of *extravagance, dissipation, vice* and *rascality unsurpassed* in fiction [*my italics*]." In other words, the cosmic note—the experience at second-hand of the contemplative student of history, lonely on his mountain top—is a gesture toward the puritan in every reader, who prefers to feel that he has been instructed rather than merely entertained. The mountain top is after all only a chair drawn up under a keyhole, through which the reader is allowed to see and hear a great many people of social distinction engaged in the better-known variations of eroticism and perversion.

But this is not merely a pornographic novel. It contains a large amount of spade-calling, and a great deal of material designed to excite, if not to shock; but much of the latter is innuendo, and all of the salaciousness is so widely scattered and larded into the main story that the reader will miss much of it unless he follows Julian Bern very carefully through five hundred pages. These pages seem so unrewarding that one would expect only unhappy adolescents to find the task worth while.

In the first place, the story is told with a maladroitness that would do credit to the Maestro Dreiser himself. Mr. Briffault employs the device of a first-person narrator who scarcely appears during the course of the

action, who has no reason for telling the story, and who yet is omniscent. I can think of no possible explanation for this device except that unconsciously Mr. Briffault wanted an alibi for his truly appalling style. If, for instance, he heard us laugh at such a sentence as this: "The place was too crowded to permit of much terpsichorean evolution," he could say hastily, "But that's the way this chap who was telling the story would have expressed himself." But the greatest parodist in the world could hardly have invented and maintained the awkward infelicities of Mr. Briffault's style. It is confusing, it grates on the ear and scratches the eye, it is pretentious—in fact, inimitable.

Secondly, the story seems unrewarding because the hero, Julian Bern, is one of the dullest dogs you are likely ever to encounter in fiction. He is a prig—looking down his nose at his chosen companions (some coroneted, some not), deploring the extravagance and selfishness of the privileged classes, but having no faint conception of himself of any value except the purely empirical ones of science and personal prejudice. From his work in biology Julian has learned something very startling about the relation between any living organism and the various cells which constitute it. On this knowledge he bases his own social conscience, and decides that the social organism will be destroyed unless each member of it admits his dependence on, and responsibility toward, all the other members. But Julian's conscience is singularly passive. It leads him to judge and condemn, but seldom to act. Further, his one little idea about the cells would seem to have gone inexplicably to his head. He is very sure that any idea which might invalidate it as a first principle is nonsense, and there is one amazing scene in which Julian, who has just "finished" with philosophy, startles and routs a roomful of Cambridge intellectuals by disposing, in a few dashing *non-sequitur's,* not only of Christianity but of every philosophical premise brought forward to refute his own nineteenth century empiricism.

Julian spends most of his time following the deplorable coronets from point to point in Europe, moving in and out of drawing-rooms and courts, experiencing all the frivolities he knows are destroying society, exchanging portentous opinions and trivia with the Best Minds, and observing from his own moral eminence the decay of morals and manners.

Nowhere in the book does he utter a memorable word, and nowhere does he have an idea that an educated person would recognize as such. The only particular acumen he shows is in his rather unusual ability to predict in pre-War days what is bound to happen to Europe after the War; he saw quite clearly, for instance, that if Europe did not abandon capitalism in time she would later be swamped by dictatorships—but this prophetic quality scarcely convinces us that his studious and sensitive nature has flowered into wisdom. And yet everyone within the covers of *Europa* admires or loves him. Royalty nearly trips over its robes to do him honor. Beautiful women desire him, and Zena, the heroine, falls in love with him when she is sixteen or so, and is still in love with him when the story ends. Philosophers listen to him respectfully, and wits laugh at his sallies. He is too *rangé* to be impressed by his success and too priggish to enjoy it. In short, he is such a colossal simulacrum that one would expect him to ruin any story, however bedizened with details, of which the skeleton is simply his spiritual progress.

But *Europa* is still high on the best-seller lists, and this is probably not a fluke, but is explicable on the grounds that it is a thoroughly vulgar book which can be said to carry a message. By *vulgar* I do not of course refer to the pornography, but to that fact that it appeals to people's well-known delight in back-stairs gossip. It is, in all its trimmings, "trashy" reading and those who do not find it diverting will, by and large, be people who prefer to take their trash straight. The snob appeal in *Europa* is laid on with a trowel. Glittering scenes abound, jewels flash, we are told the unworthy ideas that occupy the minds under all those coronets, and the reader experiences vicariously all the delights of the *haute monde;* and this vicarious wallowing is redeemed for him and made into a moral adventure by the conclusion Mr. Briffault forces him to draw—that, except for our hero and heroine, the aristocracy is made up of bounders, pathological specimens, or silly asses.

The timely message the story carries, therefore, is communism. The workers of the world are trodden under by fools and knaves; Julian Bern has a social conscience and no conception of any social order except one in which the moneyed classes are in opposition to the industrial world

of the proletariat; *ergo,* Communism is the only logical and decent way out.

The book has another appeal which will doubtless recommend it to Hollywood, in that Julian's story turns out to be an idyll. He and Zena, though separated from adolescence until the story is drawing to a close, have at heart remained true to each other. In spite of the War, in spite of the fact that when we leave Julian he is discouraged by the temporary triumph of capitalism, the story has a happy ending. Those of his readers who are as canny as Julian was when he predicted the era of dictatorships, have the jump on him here and know that since he and Zena are going to Russia, they will probably be there for the Revolution. So in spite of the fact that Julian's last words—said with a "bitter laugh"—are, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" the reader knows that they are not only intellectually inept but actually so. Besides, Julian and Zena have each other. Love conquers all, even in the hands of a writer who has never oriented anthropology in the world of thought. This should comfort all of us, even if we prefer not to dig it out of *Europa* but to take it on faith.

Old Jules, by Mari Sandoz. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. $3.00.

Caroline Gordon

OLD JULES, the Atlantic $5000 prize nonfiction book for 1935, is the story of Jules Ami Sandoz, a Nebraskan pioneer. It is also the biography of a community, the country of the upper reaches of the Niobrara River in western Nebraska. The book, the author tells us, grew out of a childhood spent among the story tellers of the frontier, "for the frontier, whether by Turner's famous definition or any other, is a land of story tellers and in this respect remains frontier in nature until the last original settler is gone."

"Old Jules," Swiss by birth, was the first settler in the river valley in which he was to make his home and later to locate hundreds of other settlers. We see him first as a dapper medical student in Zurich, eldest son

of a family that that year was celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of its founding. There is a quarrel with his father over his allowance, and Jules leaves his home on the blue waters of Lake Neuchatel and comes as far west as his money will take him, to Valentine, which in 1884 was the land office for the great free expanse of land to the west and south. An old timer in a saloon gives him a description of the country for which he is bound:

> No-count, unless you got money enough to start a cow outfit and guns enough to fight the rustlers off. Starve to death farming. Never rains, cold as blazes in winter. They brought a man up from the lake country south of here last week. Both hands froze off. Crazy as a shitepoke . . .

Jules, however, never listens to what he would not hear and he pushes on, following the old army trail to Fort Robinson until he comes to the upper reaches of the Niobrara. The land—the flats above the river—is barren except for buffalo grass and sunflowers, but it is close enough to the river for wood and game, and Jules has learned in his study of botany that where sunflowers grow corn will also grow. He settles there in a sod-roofed dugout and lives off the game he kills while he waits for the corn and beans he has planted to grow. Always he is sustained by the passionate vision of the community which will grow up about him. There is already an influx of settlers, moving in covered wagons along the old army trail. Jules meets each wagon, points out the advantage of "Mirage Flats." Sometimes they stop and Jules "locates" them. Oftener they go on. One week twenty thousand head of young cattle are driven through.

> "Looks like the cattlemen intend to hog the country," Jules tells the freighter.
>
> "Yeh, it's their meat," is the answer.
>
> "Like hell!" roars Jules. "It's the country of the poor man with a gun."

There is another problem almost as severe as the encroachments of the cattlemen, the scarcity of women in a frontier community. Jules gets three of his four wives through correspondence, the marriages in all but one case being arranged for him by members of his family. Stylish women the brides are, with velvet-trimmed dresses and feathers on their hats.

Henriette, who left a position teaching French and manners in a Boston family to marry "the postmaster of Nebraska," goes mad. Emilia leaves at the end of two weeks with a young Swiss whom Jules has just "located" on the next creek. The fourth and last wife, Mary, is of German peasant stock. To her the country, even the interior of Jules' shack, cluttered with traps and ill-smelling green hides, is not as much of a shock as it has been to the others. "Have you then no soap and water in this country?" she demands, firming her long chin.

The remainder of the story is Jules' and Mary's life together and the bringing up of their four children. Jules is hard to live with, sometimes brutal, constantly involved in law suits with cattlemen, quarrels with neighbors. But he accomplishes what he has set out to do, builds up the community he has envisioned, sees the desert around him blossom literally like the rose. The Sandoz orchards become government experiment stations. Jules carries on the correspondence, for which he has always had a passion, on letterheads bearing the names of the half-dozen learned and horticultural societies of which he is a member. The children whom he has tyrannized over go out into the world and learn that their father is, as he sometimes boasts, a great man. The book, at once a memoir and a biography, is written by his daughter, "the little Marie" of the story.

Miss Sandoz has brought to her task a high narrative skill and the ability to recreate life in authentic and moving detail. She has also a strict and beautiful sense of form. One of the most moving things about the book—and at the same time one of its most skilful narrative devices—is the author's lack of insistence on her own personality. We learn that as a growing girl she clumped about in men's shoes, that her father trained her and the other children to retrieve game exactly as a bird dog does, that, snow-blinded, she lost the sight of one eye while rounding up blizzard-dazed cattle. But all these incidents are told with the greatest economy, almost casually as if seen from the viewpoint of Old Jules himself.

Miss Sandoz in presenting her main character has not forgotten, however, that her full theme is the experience of the pioneer. As a preparation for writing her book she read all the frontier literature available and made what study she could of frontier economics and politics. "As I read," she tells us, "the stories of my childhood came back to me with new

significance. And as I arranged and rearranged the bits of information in what seemed the closest verisimilitude to life as those people lived it in the Running Water country the duty became a privilege. Not one character included or regretfully put aside would I have one whit different. These people have endured and as I review them from the vantage point of twice knowledge my eyes mist. A gallant race, and I salute them."

The reader, putting *Old Jules* down, may wonder whether Miss Sandoz can write another book as good as this one. It seems to me that it is a question whether in this age and in our civilization she can ever again find material rich enough and living enough to engage her mature and authentic talent.